

## **Parental Alienation: Target Parent Perspective**

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I declare that this research report is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material from published sources without proper acknowledgement, nor does it contain material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any university.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Parental Alienation: Target Parent Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

The present study was conducted to investigate the characteristics and experiences of parents targeted by parental alienation. The aims of the study were to determine target parent experiences of parental alienation post-separation from the alienating parent, and to investigate common target parent characteristics. This was conducted via an online survey. A total of 225 target parents participated, 120 of whom were female ( $M_{age} = 40.73$  years,  $SD = 7.05$ ). The current study's findings revealed that target parents were experiencing extremely high severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics at the hand of the alienating parent. Target parent gender and target child age were found to significantly predict variance in exposure to parental alienation. Targeted mothers experienced significantly higher severity of exposure to parental alienation compared to targeted fathers. Finally, the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics significantly predicted increases in the appraisal of the parental alienation situation as threatening. The present findings contradicted previous literature conclusions that fathers are more commonly alienated, and offered new insights into target parent appraisals of their parental alienation experience. The results signified the seriousness of the impact of exposure to parental alienation for target parents, and highlighted a need for empirical research into the effectiveness of interventions and support services to assist target parents through the process of parental alienation.

Separation and divorce are difficult processes for both the separating couple and their children. In 2011, 48.4% of divorces granted in Australia involved children under the age of 18 years, and Tasmania had one of the highest rates (53.3%) of divorces involving children in the country (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Approximately one third of divorces do not eventuate to have effective co-parenting, which is characterised by consistent expectations and limits of the child's behaviour (Campbell, 2005). Campbell (2005) suggests that a subset of this group then evolves into parental alienation cases. During the process of divorce, one parent might develop a tendency to encourage the child to reject the other parent for various reasons, such as to gain primary custody (Lorandos, Bernet, & Sauber, 2013). The process of a child irrationally denigrating one parent, while expressing irrational unabated support of the other, is what Richard Gardner (2002a) coined Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS).

### **Parental Alienation Syndrome**

According to Gardner (2002a), Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) could be a result of physical or emotional abuse, neglect, or in the case of the argument in this study, because of overt behaviours displayed by the alienating parent that attempt to undermine the target parent. Essentially, PAS involves three roles: 1) the *alienating parent*, who encourages the child to reject the other parent; 2) the *target parent*, who is being isolated from the child; and 3) the *target child*, who rejects the target parent and supports the alienating parent (Gardner, 2002a; Gottlieb, 2012). There are currently eight symptoms of PAS proposed (Gardner, 2002a, 2003; Gottlieb, 2012; Walker & Shapiro, 2010), including: 1) the alienating parent engages in a campaign of denigration against the target parent; 2) the alienating parent relies on weak rationalizations for the deprecation of the target parent; 3) the target child has a lack

of ambivalence towards both parents; 4) the target child argues that their thoughts about the target parent are their own and are not influenced by the alienating parent (independent-thinker phenomenon); 5) the target child has reflexive support of the alienating parent in parental conflicts; 6) the target child has an absence of guilt about their behaviour towards the target parent; 7) the target child retells stories about the target parent that were first created by the alienating parent, which paint the target parent in a negative light (borrowed scenarios); and 8) the rejection of the target parent spreads to the target parent's extended family and significant other.

Extensive research has been conducted to examine the existence of PAS, as well as to investigate the degree of acceptance of the syndrome. Following an investigation of custody evaluators, Baker (2007) concluded that approximately 75% of the survey respondents were familiar with PAS and believed that it was highly plausible for one parent to program a child against the other parent. However, in the same study Baker (2007) discovered that two thirds of the sample did not express a need for PAS to be a disorder in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Fifth Edition (DSM-5: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Additionally, Bernet (2008) highlighted that there is no consistency in the terminology used to refer to the concept of PAS, and that there is disagreement about the necessary criteria required to determine if parental alienation is present. Kelly and Johnston (2001) also contended that PAS has no pathological basis. This is of particular concern as the PAS diagnosis is most often given to the target child and not the alienating parent (Gardner, 1998, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Lorandos et al., 2013; Rand, 1997a). Much of the literature described that a diagnosis of PAS is given when there is evidence that the child is endorsing unprovoked contributing behaviours towards the denigration of the target parent (Gardner, 1998, 2002b, 2003; Lorandos

et al., 2013). This is concerning based on the overwhelming evidence that suggests it is the alienating parent's overt behaviours that influence the target child's behaviour towards the target parent, and that the target child does not always act on their own volition (Baker, 2005a, 2005b; Baker & Darnall, 2006; Godbout & Parent, 2012; López, Iglesias, & García, 2014; Rand, 1997a; Turkat, 1997; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001).

### **Parental Alienation as a Broad Concept**

As discussed, there is a wealth of mental health and legal literature that discounts the use of Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS: Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Meier, 2009; Rueda, 2004; Walker & Shapiro, 2010; Warshak, 2001). Thus, due to the controversy surrounding the concept of PAS the present study focuses on parental alienation as a broader concept that is not restricted by the eight symptoms described by Gardner (2002a). Even Gardner (2002a) himself came to consider PAS as a subtype of parental alienation, where parental alienation is the overarching concept.

*Parental alienation* refers to the use of a number of tactics by the alienating parent in an attempt to program the target child to reject the target parent (Bond, 2008; Gardner, 2002a; Hands & Warshak, 2011). Parental alienation differs from Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) as it encompasses all possible negative behaviours that can be present during separation cases despite where these behaviours originated (Bond, 2008; Darnall, 1998; Johnston, 2003).

The focus of the present study is on whether target parents are exposed to a range of alienating tactics. Haines, Matthewson, Turnbull, and Norris (unpublished manuscript), conducted a review of the literature to determine the range of possible alienating behaviours. Haines et al. (unpublished manuscript) determined that there

are 13 behaviours that are associated with either the target parent or the target child.

Table 1 divides the behaviours and tactics into those that are associated with acts of the alienating parent, and those that are associated with acts involving the target child.

Table 1.

*Tactics utilised by the alienating parent divided by the association each has with the target child and target parent.*

<b>Target</b>	<b>Tactic</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Child</b>	<u>Interrogation</u> : involves the AP interrogating the TC for information after the child has returned from visitation with the TP.	Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014) Vassiliou and Cartwright (2001)
	<u>Damaging loving connection</u> : involves the AP constantly telling the TC that the TP doesn't love or care for them, an attempt to make the TC fearful of the TP.	Baker (2005a, 2005b) Godbout and Parent (2013)
	<u>Emotional manipulation</u> : involves the AP withdrawing love from the child for illustrating support for the TP. Plus the AP demands expressions of loyalty from the TC.	Baker (2005a, 2005b) Baker and Darnall (2006)
	<u>Forcing a loyal response</u> : involves the AP demanding that the TC chooses a side and expresses loyalty to them and never the TP.	Baker (2005a, 2005b) Baker and Darnall (2006)
	<u>Inappropriate disclosure</u> : involves the AP disclosing inappropriate information about the adult relationship with the TC, which reflects on the TP in a negative way.	Baker (2005a, 2005b) Godbout and Parent (2013) Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014)
	<u>Encouraging an unhealthy alliance</u> : involves the AP demanding that the TC give them 100% allegiance, and requesting the TC to spy on the TP. Also involves the AP encouraging an unhealthy dependence on the AP.	Baker and Darnall (2006) Rand (1997a)
	<u>Encouraging defiance</u> : involves the AP encouraging the TC to be defiant towards the TP in order to damage their relationship.	Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014) Turkat (1997)

*Note.* AP = alienating parent; TP = target parent; TC = target child.

Target	Tactic	References
<b>Parent</b>	<u>Vilification of the TP</u> : involves the AP implying that the TP is a bad and dangerous person, who has intentions of harming the TC.	Baker (2005a, 2005b) Godbout and Parent (2013) Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014) Vassiliou and Cartwright (2001) Baker (2005a, 2005b) Baker and Darnall (2006) Godbout and Parent (2013) Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014)
	<u>Eradication of TP</u> : involves the AP interfering with communication between the TP and TC, such as blocking phone calls and throwing away mail. Also involves actual or symbolic removal of the TP from the TC's life completely, through means such as relocating without making the TP aware of where the TC has been relocated (actual) or replacing the TP with a step-parent (symbolic).	
	<u>Information gatekeeping</u> : involves the AP purposefully withholding information about the TC from the TP, and making decisions about the TC without consulting with the TP.	Baker and Darnall (2006) Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014) Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014) Turkat (1997)
<b>Both</b>	<u>Utilising outside forces</u> : involves the AP reporting and making notifications to police and child protection about the TP.	
	<u>Interference with time spent with the TP</u> : involves the alienating parent encouraging the child to engage in other activities rather than spending time with TP, as well as not producing the TC to the TP when it is their turn for visitation. Also involves the AP calling the child during visitation time with the TP, or listening in on phone calls between the TP and the TC.	Baker and Darnall (2006) Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014) Turkat (1997) Vassiliou and Cartwright (2001)
	<u>Denigration of TP</u> : involves the AP badmouthing the TP in front of the TC, and consistently belittling the TP to the TC as well as other people.	Baker (2005a, 2005b) Baker and Darnall (2006) Godbout and Parent (2013) Lopez, Iglesias and Garcia (2014) Rand (1997a)

*Note.* AP = alienating parent; TP = target parent; TC = target child.

## **The Alienating Parent**

As mentioned, there are three primary roles in the parental alienation saga described in the literature, the first of which is the alienating parent (Gardner, 1998, 2002a; Lorandos et al., 2013). There is extensive literature which describes the behaviours and characteristics of the alienating parent, and it has been suggested that they engage in alienating tactics because they are fearful that they will lose their child after separation or divorce (Gardner, 2002a; Lorandos et al., 2013; Meier, 2009; Nichols, 2013; Warshak, 2000).

The literature has outlined various characteristics of the alienating parent, including: a) narcissism and a paranoid orientation to interactions with others; b) severe cognitive distortions, such that they actually believe that the target parent is a bad person; c) externalising unwanted emotions and responsibilities; d) exhibiting anger evident of an abnormal grieving process; e) a family history of difficulty separating from parents, emotional deprivation and an absence of awareness of normal ambivalence about parents; f) personality disorders, including borderline and paranoid; and g) alcohol misuse (Baker, 2005b, 2006; Ellis & Boyan, 2010; Gardner, 1999a; Kopetski, 1998a, 1998b; Lorandos et al., 2013; Lund, 1995; Rand, 1997a, 1997b).

Gardner (2002a) also suggested that mothers increasingly engaged in parental alienation throughout child custody disputes, during the time when the father's ability to support the target child financially was increasingly considered to be favourable. However, recent research has found that both men and women engage in alienation tactics, but the tactics used are different (Hands & Warshak, 2011; López et al., 2014). For example, alienating fathers are more likely to use tactics such as encouraging the child to be defiant towards the mother, while alienating mothers are



more likely to denigrate the father in front of the child (López et al., 2014; Rand, 1997a). Throughout the period of research into these tactics adopted by alienating parents, the concern about how such tactics impact the child has resonated in the discussions.

### **The Target Child**

The second role in the instance of parental alienation belongs to the target child. The perspective of the target child has been thoroughly examined in parental alienation research, and it has been proposed that target children align themselves with the alienating parent unknowingly (Baker & Andre, 2008; Campbell, 2005). A number of commonly witnessed characteristics of target children has been outlined in the literature, including: a) the appearance of being completely dependent on the alienating parent; b) female children are slightly more likely to be targeted; and c) children around 10 to 14 years of age are more commonly alienated (Baker & Darnall, 2006; Bow, Gould, & Flens, 2009; Ellis & Boyan, 2010).

It has been suggested that there are extensive short- and long-term negative psychosocial and emotional effects for target children that can extend well into adulthood, including: a) low self-esteem; b) low self-sufficiency; c) higher risk of depression and anxiety; d) sleep disturbances; e) inability to regulate natural bodily functions; f) reduce impulse control; g) social isolation; h) lower school achievements; i) lack of trust in relationships; j) drug and alcohol use problems; and k) a disrupted social-emotional development (Baker, 2005b, 2010b; Ben-Ami & Baker, 2012; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Johnston, Walters, & Olesen, 2005; Kopetski, 1998b). Thus, it appears important to better understand the process of parental alienation so that intervention strategies can be developed to reduce the risk of such negative consequences arising.

Further, Baker (2005b) also found that in adulthood, those who were targeted by parental alienation as children were likely to have been divorced at least once and be alienated from at least one of their children. Thus, it would seem that children targeted by parental alienation might develop characteristics in adulthood similar to those presented by their targeted parents (Baker, 2005b; Baker & Andre, 2008; Friedlander & Walters, 2010). Despite knowing this potential pattern of parental alienation development, there has been little research into how this phenomenon could be reduced (Gottlieb, 2012; Warshak, 2010). Yet, there is currently encouragement in the literature for target parents to be proactive and respond more effectively towards parental alienation, whether by engaging in assertive communication with the alienating parent and the target child, or by seeking support from the family law court or a psychologist (Baker & Andre, 2008; Ellis & Boyan, 2010; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Schwartz, 2015; Warshak, 2010).

Warshak (2010), for example, suggested that target parents should take actions, such as: a) not retaliating against the target child's defiance with anger or punishment; b) continuing attempts to maintain contact regardless of interference by the alienating parent; c) reminding the target child with evidence, such as home videos or photos, of past positive target parent-child relationship; and d) assertively disapprove of maltreatment by the alienating parent or target child. However, the effectiveness of such interventions appears yet to be empirically researched (Dunne & Hedrick, 1994; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Gardner, 2001; Warshak, 2010). Nor has there been substantial research into how the characteristics and experiences of the target parent fit into the parental alienation picture, which is bound to influence the effectiveness of such interventions to positively impact on their wellbeing (Dunne & Hedrick, 1994; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Gardner, 2001; Warshak,

2010).

### **The Target Parent**

The third role in the case of parental alienation is that of the target parent (referred to as the alienated or rejected parent in some literature: Godbout & Parent, 2012; Johnston, 2003). The perspective of the target parent remains under-researched. However, some studies have identified some common emotions experienced by target parents. These include: intense negative emotions, such as frustration, stress, fear, loss, powerlessness, helplessness and anger directed at the constant interference by the alienating parent (Baker, 2010a; Baker & Andre, 2008; Baker & Darnall, 2006; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001). Throughout the process of alienation, the target parent can endure countless personal costs, and overtime they may become emotionally and financially exhausted as the process of alienation continues (Walsh & Bone, 1997).

To examine the target parent experience of parental alienation, Vassiliou and Cartwright (2001) conducted a qualitative study in which they surveyed five fathers and one mother who asserted that they had been alienated from their child. The researchers found that there was a reduction in both visitation and other forms of contact between the target parent and the target child, and all of the participants perceived that the alienating parent used denigrating techniques in order to ‘sabotage’ the relationship between them and the target child (Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001). Additionally, the target parents reported that the target children, as well as the alienating parent’s extended family members, also engaged in alienating techniques (Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001).

Throughout the literature, target children, alienating parents, legal and mental health professionals have described target parents in the following ways: *impatient*,

as they prematurely expect a change in the child's behaviour when the presence of parental alienation has been determined; *being rigid, controlling and harsh*, in their parenting style and expectations of the child; *having a distant and unskilled parenting style*, which can enhance the alienating parent's argument that they can better provide for the child's needs; *having a passive parenting style*, even prior to the separation, which can result in a vulnerable target parent-child relationship making it easy for the alienating parent to target it; *being narcissistic, immature or emotionally detached*, which interferes with their ability to be attuned to the child's emotions and needs; *experiencing difficulty managing their anger and disappointment*, which reinforces the child's negative view of them by rejecting the child in response to the child's rejection of them, for example; *withdrawing from and are avoidant of conflict*, which can occur pre- and post-separation from the alienating parent; and *being ambivalent*, in regards to wanting a relationship with the child (Baker & Andre, 2008; Drodz & Olesen, 2004; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Gottlieb, 2012; Johnston, 2003; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Rand, 1997a).

Little is known about the target parent-child relationship during the parental alienation process from the perspective of the target parent. This is despite numerous studies highlighting the negative effects of parental alienation from the target child's point of view (Baker, 2005b, 2006, 2010b; Ben-Ami & Baker, 2012; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Johnston et al., 2005). For example, in a study surveying 40 adults who were alienated from a parent in childhood, participants reported that prior to their parents separating the target parent was uninvolved in their life and did not make effort to have a positive, close relationship with them (Baker, 2006). Further, the participants described that after the separation

the targeted parent did not make an effort to contact them via phone or mail (Baker, 2006). Likewise, Ellis and Boyan (2010) suggested that prior to separation target parents may not have had a close relationship with the target child, and that they could have potentially acted in a manner that violated the child's morals, such as infidelity, which fostered the child's support for the alienating parent. However, it must be highlighted that the reports of the target children should be interpreted with caution, as such factors could have been influenced by the alienating parent without the target child's knowledge (e.g., blocked calls and false allegations of abuse: Baker, 2005a, 2006; Lowenstein, 2012; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001).

Currently the majority of descriptions of the target parent characteristics and experience are drawn from methodologically flawed literature. These methodical limitations include: small sample sizes (e.g.,  $N < 50$ ); conclusions were based on a non-systematic review of previous literature; or the informants of the target parents' experiences were professionals (e.g., legal or mental health) who have worked with the target parent or target child, or were the target child when interviewed in adulthood (Baker, 2006, 2010a; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Johnston, 2003; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001). Thus, there is a risk that assumptions have been and will continue to be made about the target parent experience, or that their experiences will be unrealistically generalisable.

Several other gaps have been identified in the literature thus far, including the lack of acknowledgement of the negative psychosocial impacts parental alienation may have on the target parent. Nor has there been literature describing common characteristics among target parents, including common sociodemographic information, such as age, gender, marital and employment status, or factors that

indicate common target parent attitudes regarding parenting, such as parental self-efficacy, confidence, responsibility, involvement and social support. Essentially, there is currently a real risk that the provision of services for target parents, both legal and mental health, is uninformed and inadequate, based on the lack of knowledge about the population as a whole. Therefore, these gaps in the current literature warrant further exploration into the target parent perspective and experience of parental alienation via a larger scale research design.

### **The Present Study**

Based on a review of the previous literature, there is a clear lack of insight into what the target parent experience of parental alienation is like, potentially due to a lack of research including target parents as the informants (Baker, 2006, 2010a; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Johnston, 2003; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001). Therefore, it is important to investigate the experience of parental alienation from the perspective of both male and female target parents, as well as the characteristics of the target parent as this is yet to be thoroughly explored. In the present study, the characteristics and experiences of the target parent will be investigated post-separation from the alienating parent, to identify further information about the relationships experienced by target parents both with the target child and the alienating parent. This research could potentially educate parents, as well as mental health and legal professionals, in order to guide them through the process of parental alienation and to offer more knowledgeable, tailored support. Due to the exploratory nature of the present study, it will not include hypothesis testing (Hesse-Biber, 2010). However, there are two aims:

- 1) to determine the target parents' experiences of parental alienation post-separation from the alienating parent

- 2) to determine what characteristics are common among target parents.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A total of 274 respondents participated in the present study. Of this sample, 118 partially completed the survey and 156 participants completed the survey in full. A total of 49 participants were excluded from the analysis, as 6 respondents identified as step-parents, while 43 respondents identified that their target child was over the age of 18 years. Of the remaining sample, 225 were included in the analyses, 105 were men ( $M_{age} = 40.86$  years,  $SD = 8.42$ ) and 120 were women ( $M_{age} = 40.73$  years,  $SD = 7.05$ ). Participants were recruited from parental alienation support websites, non-government organisations and private practices in the southern Tasmanian area, via online advertisements, poster advertisements, and personal invitations (see Appendix A). Each person participated voluntarily. The inclusion criteria were being a biological parent of a child (under the age of 18 years) who they are currently isolated from, in which the child has explicitly stated that they want nothing to do with this parent. The participants were invited to contact the researcher if they had any further questions regarding informed consent or the information sheet (see Appendix B), which were provided online prior to the beginning of the questionnaire. Sample size was determined by a G\*Power 3.1 analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), in which to detect a medium effect size of .25 and power at .80 with an alpha level of .05, 179 participants were required.

### **Procedure**

Researchers invited parents to complete an online survey. The researchers approached non-government organisations, support groups and private practices providing assistance for parents experiencing parental alienation, and asked if they

would agree to advertising the present study to their members (see Appendix C). Interested groups and organisations were provided with an information sheet and a consent form, which they were required to read and sign in consent of volunteering to advertise the present study. Participants were recruited primarily via non-government organisations and support groups, and were provided with a link to the survey online via Limesurvey (Schmitz, 2015). The survey took a maximum of 1 hour to complete. After the participants submitted the survey, they were offered contact information for legal and mental health support services that may have been of interest.

## **Materials**

**Socio-demographics.** Were collected to give a clearer context in which parental alienation occurs, and to assist determination of common characteristics among target parents. Information collected about the target parent included: age; gender; date of birth; place of birth; relationship status; employment status; and parental status (e.g., biological or step-parent; see Appendix D for a copy of the full survey). Information collected about the target child, included age and gender. Further information collected included: current custody status and number of children alienated from.

## **Outcome measures.**

***Exposure to parental alienating tactics.*** An online questionnaire was developed by the researchers to assess exposure to 13 alienating tactics. An example item includes, *“In the last month, have you experienced interference with time spent with your child?”*, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 4 = *always*). Internal consistencies using Cronbach’s alpha were calculated for the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics items in the present study. These were considered to be



acceptable (Cronbach alpha = .85) and together the 13 items accounted for 83.02% of the variance in the sample.

***Parental sense of competence.*** The Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989) was utilised to evaluate competence on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly agree* to 6 = *strongly disagree*). This measure consists of 16 items, divided into two subscales: satisfaction subscale with 9 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .75/.74); and efficacy subscale with 7 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .76/.75; Johnston & Mash, 1989). An example item is, "*Being a parent is manageable and any problems are easily solved*".

***Parental responsibility.*** The Parental Responsibility Scale (McBride & Mills, 1993) was utilised to measure parental responsibilities on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *mother always responsible* to 5 = *father always responsible*). This scale consists of 14 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .79/.98), and an example item includes, "*Determines and implements discipline strategies*".

***Parent-child relationship.*** The Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI: Gerard, 1994) was utilised to examine the nature of the parent-child relationship on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly agree* and 4 = *strongly disagree*). An additional response item (0 = *Don't Know/Not Applicable*) was added based on the fact that the current sample may not have contact nor have had a relationship with their child to enable them to answer such questions. This measure consists of 78 items divided into 7 content scales: parental support subscale with 9 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .70/.21); satisfaction with parenting subscale with 10 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .85/.22); involvement subscale with 14 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .76/.12); communication subscale with 9 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .82/.70); limit setting subscale with 12 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .88/.76); autonomy subscale with

10 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .80/.62); and role orientation subscale with 9 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .75/.38). An example item includes, "*I feel very close to my child*". The PCRI (Gerard, 1994) may be an unreliable measure for use with the current study sample, based on the low (e.g., <.6) Cronbach's alphas calculated. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) stated that low Cronbach's alphas may be due to a low number of questions, heterogeneous constructs or poor interrelatedness between items, which should be considered for use in future research with this population.

***Stress appraisal.*** The Stress Appraisal Measure (SAM: Peacock & Wong, 1990) was utilised to measure cognitive appraisals that result in stress on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*). This measure consists of 28 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  = .67) divided into 7 subscales: threat subscale with 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .73/.69); challenge subscale with 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .79/.54); centrality subscale with 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .85/.82); controllable-by-self subscale with 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .86/.85); controllable-by-others subscale with 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .84/.89); uncontrollable subscale with 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .82/.72); and stressfulness subscale with 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .75/.78: Peacock & Wong, 1990). An example item, "*Is this a totally hopeless situation?*".

***Affect.*** The Depression and Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21: Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was utilised to measure depression, anxiety and stress on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 3 = *almost always*). The scale consists of 21 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  = .95) divided into 3 subscales: depression subscale with 7 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .94/.93); anxiety subscale with 7 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .87/.89); and stress subscale with 7 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Pre/Post = .91/.88: Antony, Bieling, Cox, Enns, & Swinson, 1998). Example items include, "*I felt down*

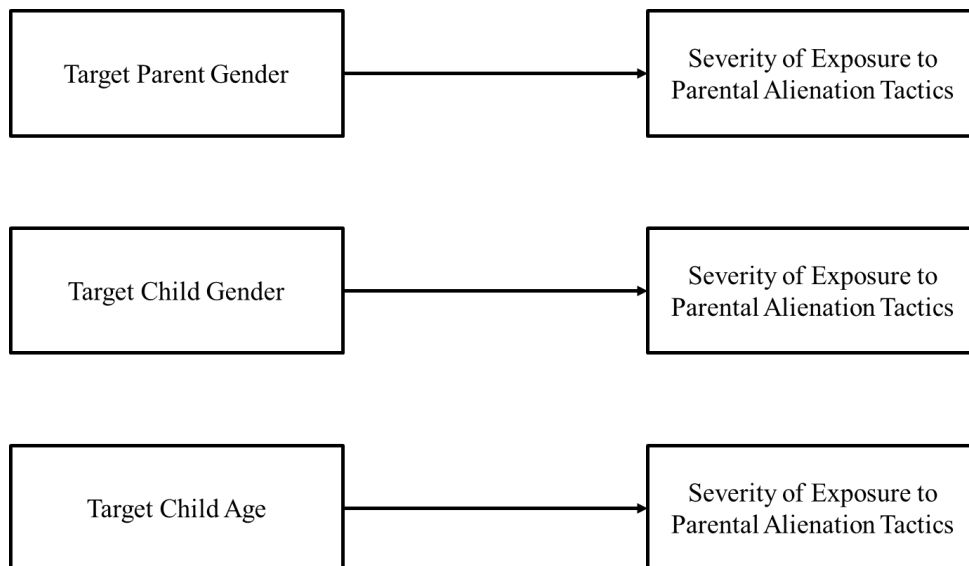
*hearted and blue*", "*I felt I was close to panic*", and "*I found myself getting agitated*", to measure depression, anxiety and stress, respectively.

### **Design and Analysis**

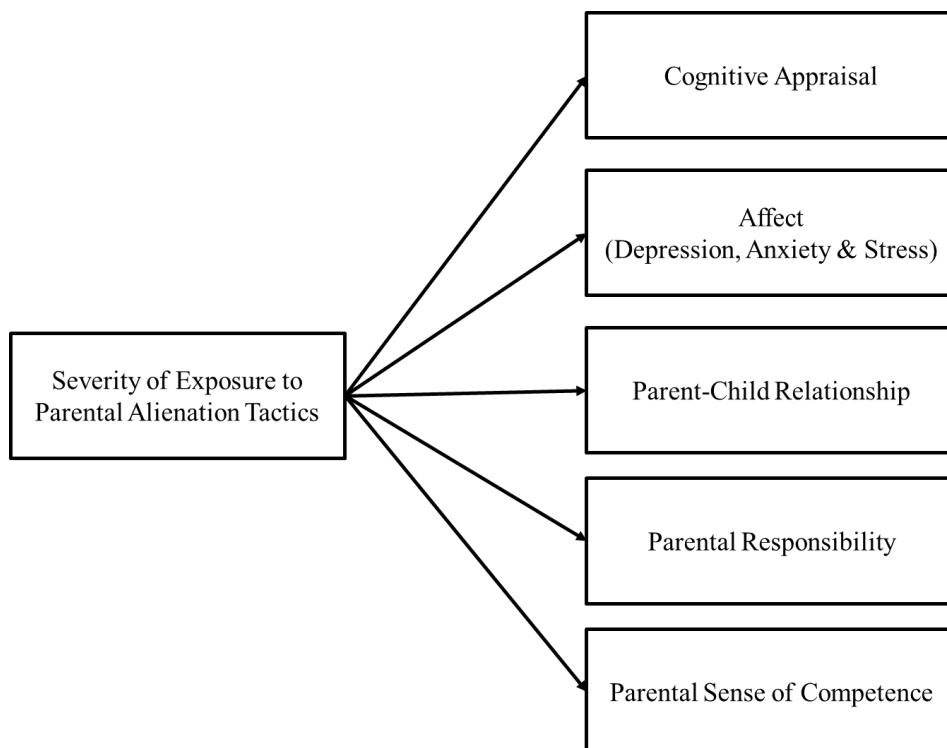
The present study utilised a 2 (target parent gender: male/female) x 2 (target child gender: male/female) x 1 (target child age) correlational design. The outcome variables included: *parental responsibility, affect, parent-child relationship, stress appraisal, parental competence, and severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics*. The predictor variables included: *target parent gender, target child gender, target child age, and severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics*.

**Regression one.** The direct effect of the predictor variables (*target parent gender, target child gender and target child age*) on the outcome variable (*severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics*), were analysed using forced entry multiple regression analyses in SPSS 21 (IBM Corp, 2012). Figure 1 illustrates the regression of the outcome variable (*severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics*) on each of the predictor variables (*target parent gender, target child gender and target child age*).

**Regression two.** The direct effect of the predictor variable (*severity of exposure to PA tactics*) on the outcome variables (*parental responsibility, parental competence, parent-child relationship, stress appraisal and affect*), was analysed using a series of univariate regression analyses in SPSS 21 (IBM Corp, 2012). Figure 2 illustrates the regression of the outcome variables (*parental responsibility, parental competence, parent-child relationship, stress appraisal and affect*) on the predictor variable (*severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics*).



*Figure 1.* Predicting severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics from target parent gender, target child age and target child gender.



*Figure 2.* Predicting cognitive appraisal, affect, parent-child relationship, parental responsibility and parental sense of competence from severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics.

## Results

### Socio-Demographics

To fulfil the aim of investigating the common characteristics among target parents, the socio-demographic information collected is discussed. The current study sample consisted of 225 participants, of whom 120 were female. Close to half of the participants (48%) were currently living in the United States of America, with 36.4% currently living in Australia. English (97.8%) was the primary language spoken by participants.

In regards to relationship status, 45.3% of the current sample reported being divorced (or separated), 34.7% were married (including defacto), 12.9% were currently single and 7.1% were never married. A chi-square goodness of fit test (with  $\alpha = .05$ ) was used to assess whether relationship status significantly differed for male and female respondents (see Appendix E). The results indicated that a significantly higher proportion of female participants reported being never married compared to male respondents,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 225) = 4.00, p = .046, w = .133$  (see Figure 3).

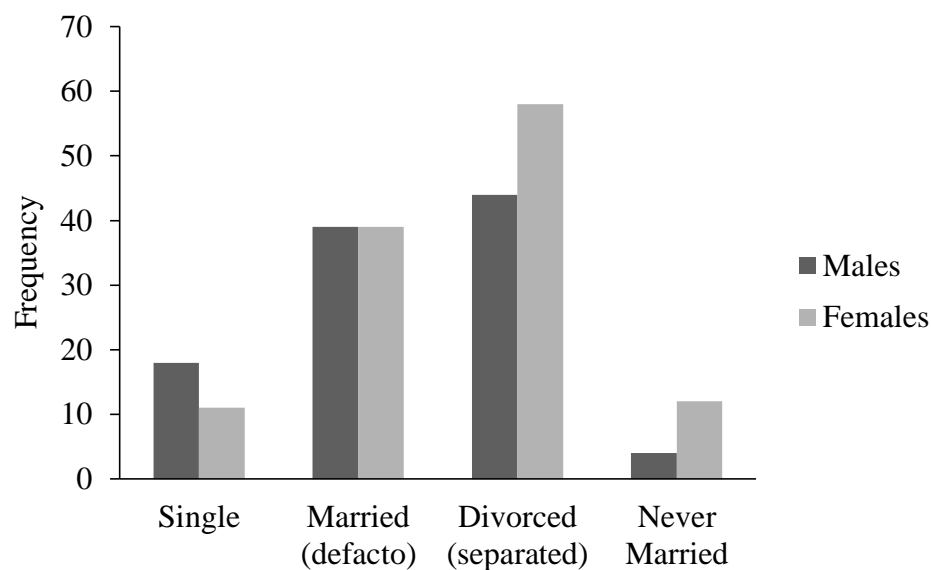


Figure 3. Distributions of male ( $n = 105$ ) and female ( $n = 120$ ) relationship status.

Over half of the participants identified as full-time employees (58.2%), with 14.2% identifying as part-time employees, while 19.6% and the remaining 8% reported being unemployed and part- or full-time students, respectively. A chi-square goodness of fit test (with  $\alpha = .05$ ) was used to assess whether employment status significantly differed for male and female respondents (see Appendix F). The results indicated that a significantly higher proportion of female participants reported being employed part-time,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 225) = 10.13, p = .001, w = .212$ , as well as not employed,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 225) = 5.82, p = .016, w = .161$ , compared to male respondents (see Figure 4).

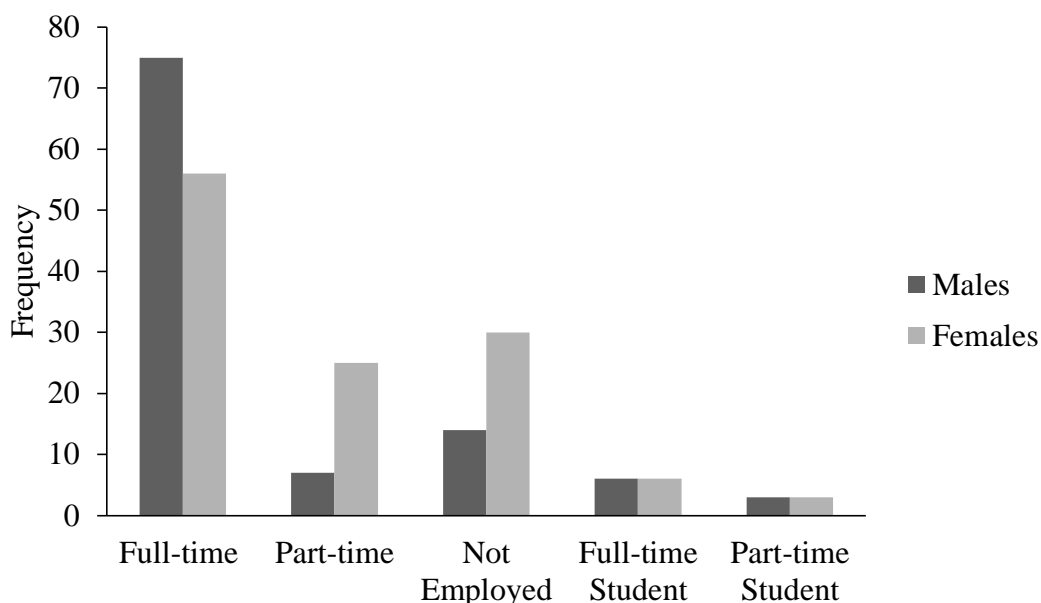


Figure 4. Distributions of male ( $n = 105$ ) and female ( $n = 120$ ) employment status.

Approximately 95.6% of the sample reported having between 1 and 4 biological children, with 83 respondents reporting having children with people other than the alienating parent, and 56 indicating that they had step-children.

In relation to information collected about the parental alienation experience, over half of the participants (51.6%) reported that they were alienated from one

child, while the remaining participants reported being alienated from between two and six children. Of these children, each participant was required to report on their experiences being alienated from one target child in particular throughout the survey. The target child age ranged from 1 year to 18 years old ( $M_{age} = 11.32$ ;  $SD_{age} = 4.74$ ), with participants reporting 102 of the target children being male ( $M_{age} = 11.27$ ;  $SD_{age} = 4.71$ ) and 123 being female ( $M_{age} = 11.37$ ;  $SD_{age} = 4.77$ ).

A total of 207 respondents reported that the target child does not currently reside with them. In regards to current custody status, 27.1% of respondents indicated having no custody, 22.7% were a non-custodial parent with visitation and 17.3% reported having joint custody of the target child with the alienating parent. Of the 61 respondents who indicated currently having no custody of the target child, 37.7% reported that they were supposed to have a joint custody arrangement.

### **Data Assumptions and Screening**

The distributional properties of the data were assessed before the primary analyses were conducted (see Appendix G). Examination of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality and values of skewness and kurtosis, indicated that there was an evident violation of the assumption of normality. Further, several outliers for each variable were detected. This violation was addressed by transforming the data using the Winsorizing technique, in order to retain the sample size and power (Field, 2012; Lusk, Halperin, & Heilig, 2011). Following this transformation, further screening revealed that each outcome variable, with the exception of the parental responsibility variable, was free from outliers.

As the first regression analysis contained multiple predictor variables, screening for multicollinearity and multivariate outliers occurred. Mahalanobis distance did not exceed the critical  $\chi^2$  for  $df = 3$  (at  $\alpha = .001$ ) of 16.27 for any cases in

the data file, indicating that multivariate outliers were not of concern. Finally, relatively high tolerances for each predictor variable indicated that multicollinearity would not interfere with our ability to interpret the analysis (see Appendix H).

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Through examination of the means and standard deviations of each outcome variable (see Appendix I), it is evident that overall the current study sample were experiencing moderate levels of depression ( $M = 9.52$ ,  $SD = 6.12$ ) and anxiety ( $M = 6.66$ ,  $SD = 5.50$ ), and mild levels of stress ( $M = 9.30$ ,  $SD = 4.93$ ), as measured by the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21: Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

Further, the current sample appraised that their current situation of parental alienation, as measured by the Stress Appraisal Measure (SAM: Peacock & Wong, 1990) subscales, was moderately controllable by themselves ( $M = 12.11$ ,  $SD = 4.28$ ), uncontrollable by anyone ( $M = 13.15$ ,  $SD = 4.08$ ), and challenging to manage ( $M = 12.38$ ,  $SD = 3.32$ ). On average the sample rated that the likelihood of the alienation being controllable by any person is unlikely ( $M = 7.60$ ,  $SD = 3.56$ ), and that the alienation was highly stressful ( $M = 16.93$ ,  $SD = 2.65$ ), threatening to their wellbeing ( $M = 16.35$ ,  $SD = 3.12$ ), as well as an important determinant for their wellbeing ( $M = 18.12$ ,  $SD = 2.31$ ).

The current sample also reported high scores ( $> 39$ ) across all of the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI: Gerard, 1994) subscales, indicating that they: are financially and emotionally supported ( $M = 50.01$ ,  $SD = 10.10$ ); derive relatively high satisfaction from being a parent ( $M = 50.19$ ,  $SD = 9.90$ ); have a great propensity to seek out involvement in their child's life ( $M = 50.05$ ,  $SD = 10.04$ ); have a good awareness of how well they communicate with their child ( $M = 49.98$ ,  $SD = 9.97$ ); feel in control of necessary boundary setting for their child ( $M = 50.14$ ,  $SD = 9.86$ ); a



willingness to promote their child's age-appropriate autonomy ( $M = 50.14$ ,  $SD = 9.96$ ); and have an attitude mostly consistent with the sharing of parental responsibilities ( $M = 50.09$ ,  $SD = 9.97$ ).

Further, overall the current sample indicated moderate levels of parental satisfaction ( $M = 36.66$ ,  $SD = 6.84$ ) and parental self-efficacy ( $M = 21.17$ ,  $SD = 5.63$ ), as measured by the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC: Johnston & Mash, 1989). Additionally, respondents reported scores on the Parental Responsibility Scale (PRS: McBride & Mills, 1993), which indicated that they perceived that responsibility for child care tasks for the target child, should be fairly distributed between both mothers and fathers ( $M = 38.79$ ,  $SD = 12.24$ ).

In regards to the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics, overall the current sample rated extremely high severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics ( $M = 40.15$ ,  $SD = 9.01$ ; Min. = 0 to Max. = 52). In particular, the occurrence of damaging loving connection and information gatekeeping tactics were the most highly reported by 99.6% of participants, with the encouraging defiance tactic being the least reported (80%: see Appendix J).

### **Regression One**

To estimate the proportion of variance in severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics that can be accounted for by target parent gender, target child gender and target child age, a standard multiple regression analysis was performed.

**Multiple Regression Analysis.** In combination, target parent gender, target child gender and target child age accounted for a significant 7.8% of the variability in severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics,  $R^2 = .078$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .065$ ,  $F(3, 220) = 6.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .078$ . This revealed significant positive correlations between severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics and target parent gender,  $t$

(3) = 2.63,  $p = .009$ ,  $d = .354$ , 95% CI [.80, 5.58], as well as target child age,  $t(3) = 2.03$ ,  $p = .044$ ,  $d = .274$ , 95% CI [.01, .52] (see Appendix K).

**One-Way ANOVA.** In a second step, a one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to further investigate the differential severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics for mothers and fathers. Inspection of the skewness, kurtosis and Shapiro-Wilk statistics indicated that the assumption of normality was supported (see Appendix L). Levene's statistic was non-significant,  $F(1, 222) = .583$ ,  $p = .446$ , and thus assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated (see Appendix M). The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of target parent gender on the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics,  $F(1, 222) = 11.54$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .049$ , in which mothers ( $M = 42.01$ ,  $SD = 8.45$ ) experienced a significantly higher severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics than fathers ( $M = 38$ ,  $SD = 9.21$ ; see Figure 5).

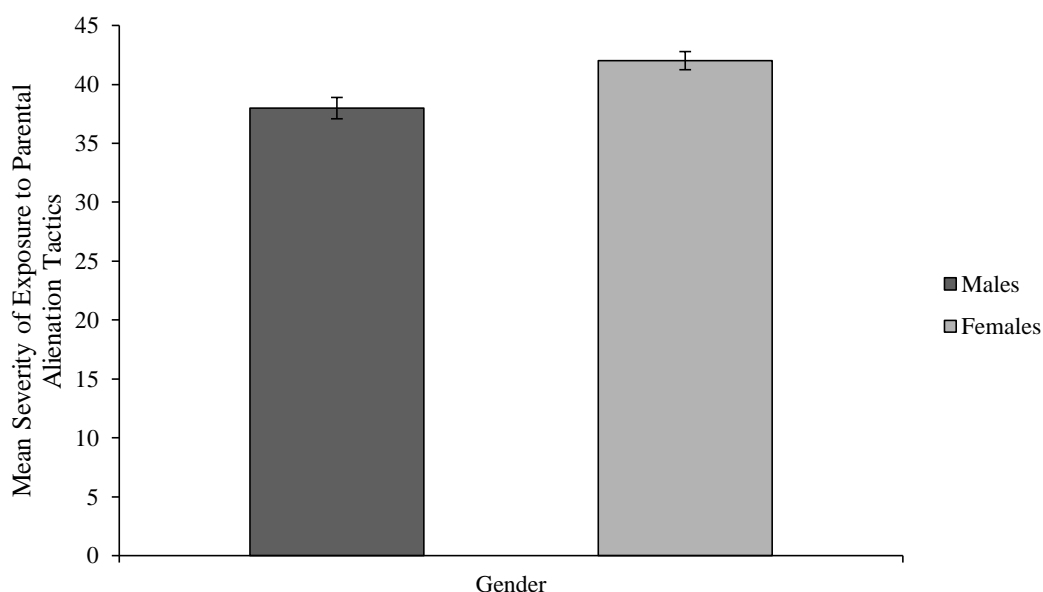


Figure 5. Differences in mean severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics for males and females with error bars depicting 95% confidence intervals.

Further, a series of one-way ANOVAs were used to investigate the differential severity of exposure to each of the 13 alienation tactics included in the present study, for mothers and fathers. Inspection of the skewness and kurtosis of the data revealed that the outcomes were negatively skewed, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk statistics were significant, which indicated that the assumption of normality was violated (see Appendix L). Further, Levene's statistics for several items were significant, and thus assumption of homogeneity of variance for these outcomes were violated (see Appendix M). However, inspection of the Welch statistics indicated that the means of the groups are significantly different, and thus equal variances between groups can be assumed (Field, 2009: see Appendix M).

A significant main effect of target parent gender on the severity of exposure to the alienating parent: interrogating the target child,  $F(1, 223) = 9.92, p = .002, \eta^2 = .043$ ; speaking badly about the target parent in front of the target child,  $F(1, 223) = 10.43, p = .001, \eta^2 = .045$ ; withdrawing love from target child when they express support for the target parent,  $F(1, 223) = 4.84, p = .029, \eta^2 = .021$ ; demanding target child to be loyal only to them,  $F(1, 223) = 5.99, p = .015, \eta^2 = .026$ ; inappropriately disclosing information about the target parent to target child,  $F(1, 223) = 7.95, p = .005, \eta^2 = .035$ ; encouraging an unhealthy alliance with target child,  $F(1, 223) = 8.27, p = .004, \eta^2 = .036$ ; and encouraging the target child to be defiant while spending time with the target parent,  $F(1, 223) = 18.64, p < .001, \eta^2 = .077$ . Planned contrasts revealed that mothers experienced significantly higher severity of exposure to each of the tactics compared to fathers (see Appendix N).

## **Regression Two**

To estimate the proportion of variance in parental competence, parent-child relationship, stress appraisal and parental responsibility that can be accounted for by

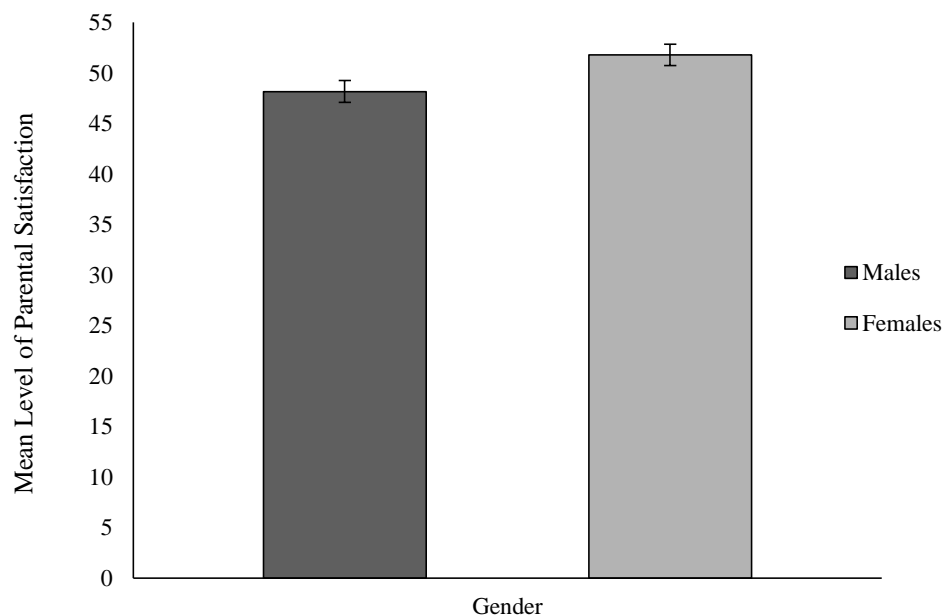
the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics, a series of standard multiple regression analyses were performed.

**Regression Analyses.** The severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics accounted for a significant 3.8% of the variance in appraisal of how threatening the parental alienation situation was, as measured by the Stress Appraisal Measure threat subscale,  $R^2 = .038$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .03$ ,  $F(1, 129) = 5.11$ ,  $p = .026$  (see Appendix O). This revealed a significant positive correlation between severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics and stress appraisal of the potential harm or loss that may come in the future due to the parental alienation experience,  $t(129) = 2.26$ ,  $p = .026$ ,  $d = .398$ , 95% CI [.01, .14]. The severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics did not account for significant variances for any of the remaining outcome variables (see Appendix O).

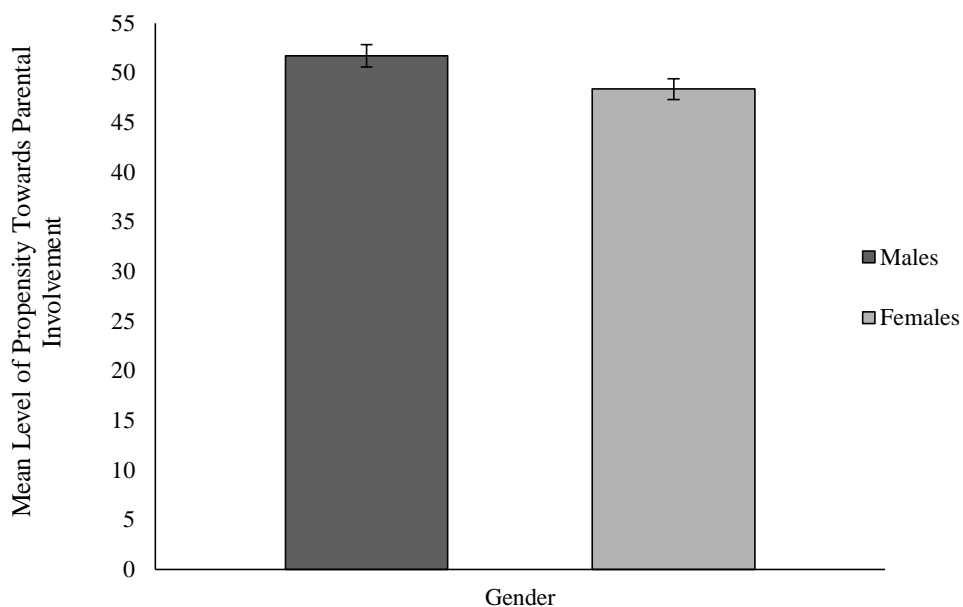
**One-Way ANOVA.** In a second step, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted to investigate any differences between mothers and fathers for each of the outcome variables (*parental responsibility*, *parental competence*, *parent-child relationship*, *stress appraisal* and *affect*). Inspection of the skewness, kurtosis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk statistics indicated that the assumptions of normality were supported (see Appendix G). Levene's statistics were non-significant for parental satisfaction,  $F(1, 166) = .443$ ,  $p = .506$ , parental involvement,  $F(1, 166) = .009$ ,  $p = .925$ , and parental role orientation,  $F(1, 165) = 1.460$ ,  $p = .229$ , and thus assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated (see Appendix M).

The ANOVA showed a significant main effect of target parent gender on: satisfaction with parenting, as measured by the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI) satisfaction subscale,  $F(1, 166) = 5.61$ ,  $p = .019$ ,  $\eta^2 = .033$ ; parental involvement, as measured by the PCRI involvement subscale,  $F(1, 166) = 4.83$ ,  $p$

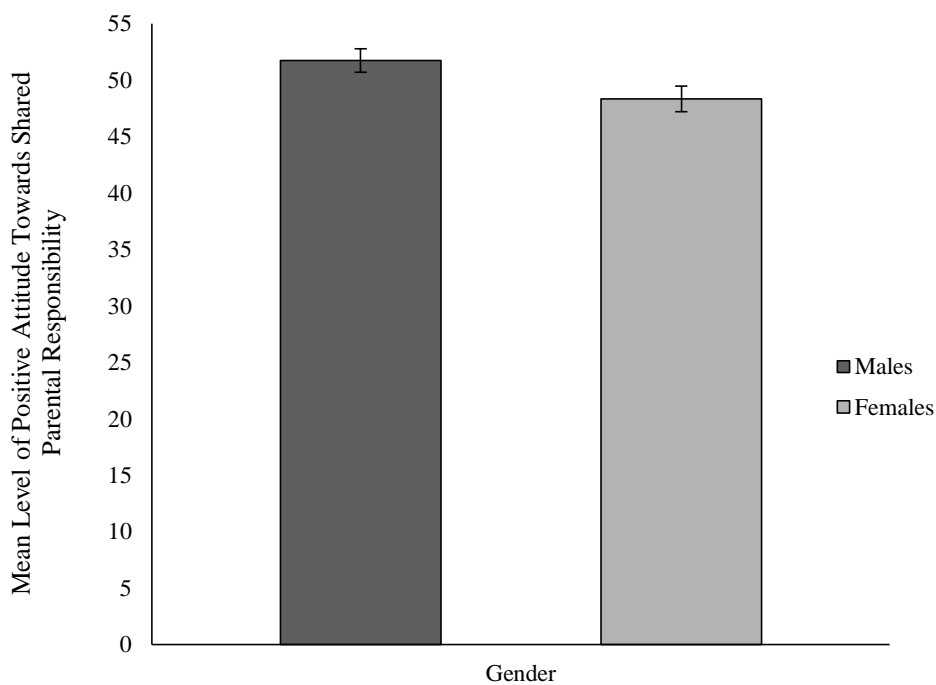
$= .029$ ,  $\eta^2 = .028$ ; parental role orientation, as measured by PCRI role orientation subscale,  $F(1, 165) = 4.98$ ,  $p = .027$ ,  $\eta^2 = .029$ . Planned contrasts revealed that mothers reported significantly higher reflections of satisfaction with parenting ( $M = 51.76$ ,  $SD = 9.84$ ) compared to fathers ( $M = 48.15$ ,  $SD = 9.89$ ),  $t(166) = -2.37$ ,  $p = .019$ ,  $d = -.387$  (see Figure 6). In comparison, planned contrasts showed that fathers had significantly higher propensity to seek out their child and show interest in being involved with their life activities ( $M = 51.72$ ,  $SD = 10.19$ ) compared to mothers ( $M = 48.36$ ,  $SD = 9.59$ ),  $t(166) = 2.20$ ,  $p = .029$ ,  $d = .342$  (see Figure 7), as well as significantly higher attitudes consistent with the sharing of parental responsibility ( $M = 51.73$ ,  $SD = 9.30$ ) compared to mothers ( $M = 48.32$ ,  $SD = 10.41$ ),  $t(165) = 2.23$ ,  $p = .027$ ,  $d = .347$  (see Figure 8).



*Figure 6.* Differences in mean levels of parenting satisfaction for males and females with error bars depicting 95% confidence intervals.



*Figure 7.* Differences in mean levels of propensity towards parental involvement for males and females with error bars depicting 95% confidence intervals.



*Figure 8.* Differences in mean levels of positive attitude towards shared parental responsibility for males and females with error bars depicting 95% confidence intervals.

## **Discussion**

The present study was conducted to explore two aims: 1) to determine the target parents' experiences of parental alienation post-separation from the alienating parent; and 2) to determine what characteristics are common among target parents. Previous research on parental alienation has largely looked at the characteristics of the alienating parent (Baker, 2005b, 2006; Ellis & Boyan, 2010; Gardner, 1999a; Kopetski, 1998a, 1998b; Lorandos et al., 2013; Lund, 1995; Meier, 2009; Nichols, 2013; Rand, 1997a, 1997b; Warshak, 2000), as well as the characteristics and negative impact parental alienation has on the target child (Baker & Darnall, 2006; Bow et al., 2009; Ellis & Boyan, 2010). However, the experience of parental alienation from the perspective of the target parent has been under-researched, and those studies that do involve investigating the target parent have methodological limitations (Baker & Andre, 2008; Drodz & Olesen, 2004; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Johnston, 2003; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Rand, 1997a). As a result, the nature of the current study was exploratory and did not involve hypothesis testing (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

### **Target Parent Experiences of Parental Alienation**

**Exposure to parental alienation tactics.** The findings of the present study suggest that the current sample were experiencing an extremely high severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics. While each of the tactics were reported by 80% or more of the participants, the most highly reported tactics included the occurrence of the alienating parent attempting to damage the loving connection between the target parent-child relationship and the alienating parent withholding information from the target parent about the target child. The present study also showed that, in combination, target parent gender, target child gender and target

child age, significantly predicted changes in the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics. Specifically, the results showed that as target child age increased, the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics also increased for the target parent.

Target parent gender was also found to significantly predict changes in the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics. Further exploration of this finding revealed that mothers experienced significantly higher severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics compared to fathers. This finding did not support the conclusions of previous research, which has continued to suggest that mothers are most commonly found to be the alienating parents, and thus fathers experience a higher frequency and severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics (Bow et al., 2009; Ellis & Boyan, 2010; Gardner, 2002a; Johnston, 2003; Meier, 2009; Nichols, 2013; Rand, 1997a; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001).

The present findings do offer some empirical support for the suggestion that alienating mothers and alienating fathers appear to engage in differing tactics against the target parent (Gardner, 1992; Lorandos et al., 2013). The current study's findings showed that compared to target fathers, target mothers experienced significantly higher severity of exposure to the alienating parent interrogating the target child following spending time with the target parent (*interrogation*), the alienating parent speaking badly about the target parent in front of the target child and others (*denigration*), the alienating parent withdrawing love from the target child if they express support for the target parent (*withdrawing love*), the alienating parent demanding a loyal response from the target child (*demanding loyalty*), the alienating parent inappropriately disclosing information about the target parent to the target child (*inappropriate disclosure of information*), the alienating parent encouraging an



unhealthy alliance with the target child (*unhealthy alliance*) and the alienating parent encouraging the target child to be defiant while spending time with the target parent (*encouraging defiance*).

This present study finding supports Gardner (1992), who described that alienating fathers are more likely to engage in emotional manipulation and denigration tactics against the target mother, as the target mothers in the present study experienced significantly higher severity of exposure to emotional manipulation and denigration tactics at the hand of the alienating parent.

**The impacts of exposure to parental alienation tactics.** In relation to the impact that parental alienation has on the target parent, one of the most important findings of the present study was that the target parents' perceptions of situational threat to current and/or future wellbeing, could be significantly predicted by increases in the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics. That is, the higher the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics, the more target parents perceived the situation to be a threat to their wellbeing.

Additionally, the respondents appraised their current situation of parental alienation as highly stressful and threatening to their current and/or future wellbeing, as well as an important determinant for their current and/or future wellbeing. Further, the sample indicated that they perceived the parental alienation situation to be moderately controllable by themselves and moderately challenging to manage, yet unlikely to be controllable by anyone. Although there is currently a movement towards encouraging target parent involvement in intervention strategies, such as seeking support from family lawyers or psychologists (Baker & Andre, 2008; Ellis & Boyan, 2010; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Schwartz, 2015; Warshak, 2010). Considering the target parents' appraisal of the controllability of the parental alienation process, it

would be imaginable that engaging in interventions might be difficult for target parents, particularly as their perceptions about their ability to control the outcome of the situation is not positive. Similarly, if target parents appraise the situation as unlikely to be controllable by anyone, they may be unlikely to think that external help will be beneficial. This may have been a consequence of having sought external help previously, such as that of a psychologist or lawyer, which was unsuccessful (Baker, 2010a; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001). Further investigation of this issue may be beneficial, with an aim to increase the effectiveness of support services provided to target parents.

The findings of the current study also indicate that the sample were experiencing moderate levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. While this finding may appear obvious based on the highly stressful nature of the parental alienation process, there is limited evidence of target parents experiencing negative affect, such as depression and anxiety (Baker, 2010a). However, one study conducted by Baker (2010a), examining the target parent experience of the child custody dispute process, determined that all of the participants reported experiencing anxiety and depression (~80% rated high levels). Baker (2010a) also suggested that high levels of depression and anxiety are counter-productive in parental alienation conditions, as it limits an individual's ability to interact with others effectively, including professionals and other support persons. In particular, involvement in custody disputes requires immense preparation, energy and motivation, all of which may be reduced by depression and anxiety (Baker, 2010a).

**Impacts on the target parent-child relationship.** In regards to the target parent-child relationship, the present study's findings showed that overall the target parents indicated high levels of satisfaction and support, high propensities to be

involved in the target child's life, high confidence in their ability to discipline and set boundaries for the target child, high levels of encouragement of target child's autonomy, a good awareness of their ability to communicate with the target child, and an attitude consistent with the sharing of parental responsibilities with relaxed expectations based on gender roles. This finding highlights that despite the various difficulties target parents have in attempting to maintain a relationship with the target child, they appear to have the desire to continue to seek out involvement in their life.

Further, these current findings are in contrast to previous descriptions of target parents in the literature, in which target parents were described as being rigid, controlling, distant, unskilled, passive and emotionally detached (Baker & Andre, 2008; Drodz & Olesen, 2004; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Gottlieb, 2012; Johnston, 2003; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Rand, 1997a). For example, previous literature has described target parents as ambivalent in regards to wanting a relationship with the child (Baker & Andre, 2008; Friedlander & Walters, 2010). Yet, the target parents in the present study revealed great desires to continue to seek out involvement in the target child's life.

### **Target Parent Characteristics**

The second aim of the current study was to explore the common characteristics of the current target parent population, through examination of sociodemographic information collected via the survey. In regards to the relationship statuses of the present study sample, the majority of respondents reported being divorced or separated, closely followed by married or defacto. Previously, separation or divorce, as well as the target parent remarrying have been proposed to provoke the parental alienation process (Baker, 2006; Warshak, 2000). While comments regarding the relationship between these factors and the development of parental

alienation cannot be made for the current study population, it can be confirmed that the target parents in the present sample were most commonly separated, divorced or remarried.

Similarly, previous literature has suggested that the ability of one parent to offer financial support for the child during child custody disputes, has coincided with an increase in the other parent resorting to alienation tactics to strengthen their position in the dispute (Gardner, 2002a). The present study's findings can neither confirm nor deny that this may have been the case for the present sample. However, exploration of the employment and custody statuses of the current study sample did reveal that over half of the participants identified as full-time employees, and the majority of respondents indicated having no custody of the target child. While associations between employment and child custody status cannot be made based on the present study's findings, this could be an interesting direction for future research.

Investigation of the factors of the parental alienation experience for the present study sample, revealed that both mothers and fathers were more frequently alienated from children aged 7 years or older. Based on the high severity ratings of parental alienation exposure coupled with the target child characteristics identified in the current study, this supports the findings of earlier research, which determined that parental alienation is more likely to be reported as severe when target children are around the age of 10 to 14 years or over (Baker, 2006; Bow et al., 2009).

In the present study, target fathers reported being most commonly alienated from female target children than male target children, while target mothers were alienated from both genders almost equally. Previous studies have found that female children are slightly more likely to be targeted in parental alienation cases (Baker & Darnall, 2006; Bow et al., 2009; Ellis & Boyan, 2010), which held true only for the

reports by target fathers in the present study.

### **Clinical Implications**

The present study's finding, which suggests that target parents feel that their wellbeing is significantly threatened by their exposure to the parental alienation tactics, signifies that there is a need for greater support services for target parents to reduce the likelihood of the severity of exposure increasing. The present study also highlighted that the sample were experiencing moderate levels of anxiety and depression, which has the potential to interfere with the target parent's motivation to seek out support services, particularly as the present sample also appraised their current experience with parental alienation as a moderately uncontrollable situation. Thus, mental health and legal professionals might do well to identify the presence of negative affect and review the individual's cognitive appraisal of the situation, to ensure that they are able to tailor the support to the individual as best they can.

As the current findings contradict depictions of target parents in previous literature, professionals should not make assumptions about gender, nor should they assume that target parents are ineffective parents. Finally, professionals need to be aware of the presence and severity of parental alienation tactics, as the more severe the exposure to the tactics, the greater the impact on the mental health of the target parent becomes. This could then determine how the provision of support is tailored to best suit the needs of the target parent.

### **Limitations**

There are some limitations of the present study that are important to note. Firstly, the population targeted for recruitment was small due to restrictions on eligibility to participate, which excluded participants over the age of 60 years, as well as parents with children over the age of 18 years or who had reunified with the target child.

Secondly, researchers received unsolicited feedback from advertisers and participants about difficulties using the Limesurvey program to complete the online survey, and that some questions were difficult to answer as several respondents had not seen their child for several years. This resulted in missing data from incomplete surveys.

Methodologically the second set of regression analyses in the study might be underpowered, as based on a power analysis 179 participants would have been required to detect moderate effect sizes, but only 169 participants completed the full survey. However, the marginal small effect sizes suggest that a larger sample size would have been unlikely to affect the results.

Finally, as the current study is cross-sectional, comments about the development of the parental alienation process, as well as associations between the target parent characteristics and the severity of exposure to parent alienation tactics overtime, cannot be made.

### **Direction for Future Research**

A longitudinal study examining the presence of the participant characteristics as determined in the present study, and how these interact could prove beneficial in understanding when such characteristics develop and become more influential in the parental alienation process. Similarly, looking into the outcome variables included in the present study in a repeated measures design, may assist in determining if they developed due to the exposure to parental alienation or whether they were there prior to the parental alienation.

What is currently lacking in target parent research is a qualitative analysis of common target parent characteristics and experiences (Baker, 2005b), particularly those characteristics that have been outlined in the present study and previous

literature (Baker, 2010a; Baker & Andre, 2008; Drodz & Olesen, 2004; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Gottlieb, 2012; Johnston, 2003; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Rand, 1997a).

Finally, as the evidence for target parent characteristics expands with further research, examining the effectiveness of interventions, such as the family systems approach or cognitive restructuring of the target child (Gardner, 2001; Gottlieb, 2012), is important. This is necessary to establish some evidence-based approaches to support target parents experiencing parental alienation.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The present study was conducted to investigate the characteristics and experiences of parents targeted by parental alienation. The aims of the study, firstly to determine the target parents' experiences of parental alienation post-separation from the alienating parent, and secondly to determine what characteristics were common among target parents, were examined via an online survey.

The current study's findings revealed that target parents were experiencing extremely high severity of exposure to the 13 parental alienation tactics outlined in Haines et al. (unpublished manuscript), as over 80% of the sample reported experiencing each of the 13 tactics. In combination, target parent gender, target child gender and target child age were found to significantly predict variances in the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics. Specifically, as target child age increased, the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics increased for target parents. Further, target mothers were found to experience significantly higher severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics compared to target fathers. Finally, the severity of exposure to parental alienation tactics significantly predicted increases in target parent appraisal of the parental alienation situation as threatening.

The present study's findings contradicted previous literature, which concluded that fathers were more likely to experience parental alienation than mothers (Bow et al., 2009; Ellis & Boyan, 2010; Gardner, 2002a; Johnston, 2003; Meier, 2009; Nichols, 2013; Rand, 1997a; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001). The present findings also offered new insights into target parent appraisals of their parental alienation experience and their ability to control the exposure to parental alienation.

In conclusion, target parents are exposed to a number of parental alienation tactics that can significantly impact on their wellbeing. Understanding the experience of parental alienation from the target parent perspective, is important to ensure that support services are well informed and are engaging in interventions that are evidence-based for improving outcomes for target parents. Continued research from the target parent perspective may be instrumental in this.



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## Appendix B

### Information Sheet with an Explanation Regarding Informed Consent



### Parental Alienation: A Target Parent Perspective.

Welcome to our study! We are investigating the experience of parental alienation from the perspective of targeted parents, and we are also interested in exploring the characteristics of targeted parents. The following is some important information that we need you to read and understand before you can continue to the survey.

#### Invitation

You are invited to participate in a study examining how parents experience alienation from their child, which is encouraged by an ex-partner. This research is being conducted as a partial fulfilment of a Master of Clinical Psychology degree for Sian Balmer under the supervision of Dr Mandy Matthewson and Dr Kimberly Norris.

#### What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of this study is to examine the characteristics and experiences of parental alienation from the perspective of the parent who is alienated from their child.

#### Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study because our research targets are parents aged between 18 to 60 years in the general population, who are currently alienated from one of their biological children. It is important to acknowledge that your participation is voluntary, whilst we would appreciate your involvement, we respect your right to decline and this decision will have no consequences. Additionally, if you decide to withdraw your consent to participate at any stage during the study, you may do so without providing an explanation. Your information will be kept completely confidential, you will be identified by a unique code, and no names will be used in the publication of this research. All information will be kept in a locked storage compartment and a secure computer file.

#### What will I be asked to do?

The research will take place online via Limesurvey. By submitting the survey after completion, you are indicating your consent to participate in this study. The survey

will involve a series of questions with scales ranging from 0 = strongly agree to 4= strongly disagree, or 0 = never to 4 = always, for example. Here is an example statement: 'In the last month, have you experienced interference with time spent with your child?'. This process should take approximately 1 hour.

#### **Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?**

If you participate in this study you may gain a greater understanding of your own experiences of parental alienation and how you cope with this experience. The results of the study may have implications for the development of improved therapeutic assistance for people struggling with similar alienated relationships.

#### **Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

There are no specific risks associated with participating in this study. However, if you do become concerned or stressed while completing the survey, you can contact the Chief Investigator who will provide you with information about free counselling services that may assist you or you can contact the free counselling services listed below:

Family Relationships Advice Line - Ph: 1800 050 321

Lifeline (Crisis Counselling) - Ph: 13 11 14

Family Violence Counselling and Support - Ph: 1800 608 122

Beyond Blue - Ph: 1300 22 4636

#### **What if I change my mind during or after the study?**

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time, and if you decide to do so, you may without providing an explanation. Although, if you have completed the study you are unable to withdraw your data as it has been collected anonymously.

#### **What will happen to the information when this study is over?**

The data from this study will be stored in a School of Psychology locked storage compartment and a secure computer database. The data will be destroyed five years after the publication of the thesis via secure document disposal and deletion of files (November 2019). The data will be kept in a confidential manner and only the researchers involved in this study will have access to this data.

#### **How will the results of the study be published?**

This study following completion will be accessible on the University of Tasmania website ([www.utas.edu.au](http://www.utas.edu.au)), and will be produced as a Masters thesis. Participants will be non-identifiable in the publication of results.

### What if I have questions about this study?

Dr Mandy Matthewson: Mandy.Matthewson@utas.edu.au

Dr Kimberley Norris: Kimberley.Norris@utas.edu.au

Sian Balmer: sbalmer@utas.edu.au

“This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [H14391].”

The questionnaire you are about to begin has a wide range of questions in which you will be asked to answer all of them. We ask that you please answer each question as best you can, and that you do not dwell on any question for too long. At the end of the survey you will have the chance to provide any additional information you think will help us to understand parental alienation better. We ask that you do not provide any identifying information in this section. Further if you do identify any perpetrator of an illegal act the researches are bound by law to report this information to the appropriate authorities.

Before you begin, we would like to just explain a few terms that will be used throughout the survey, which you will need to understand to answer some of the questions.

**Target parent** = this should be you, as it describes the parent who is currently isolated from their child.

**Target child** = is the child who you choose to report about in this survey, and you must currently be isolated from this child.

**Alienating parent** = this is the target child's other parent, who is actively making it difficult for you to have a relationship with your child, who you share together. You should have previously been in a relationship with this parent at some stage of your child's life.

Please feel free to clarify any information by contacting the researcher before you start this survey if you need to. Thank you again for your interest!

**Please click next to begin the survey. By submitting your completed answers on the survey you are indicating your consent to participate in the research.**

## Appendix C

### Letter of Invitation to Advertise the Current Study



### Parental Alienation: A Target Parent Perspective.

To the organisation manager,

We are writing to ask if your organisation would be willing to advertise a study we are currently undertaking at the University of Tasmania, titled 'Parental Alienation: A Target Parent Perspective'. This study is examining how parents experience alienation from their child, which is encouraged by an ex-partner. This research is being conducted as a partial fulfilment of a Master of Clinical Psychology degree for Sian Balmer under the supervision of Dr. Mandy Matthewson and Dr. Kimberley Norris.

The following is some more information about the study for your knowledge:

#### What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of this study is to examine the characteristics and experiences of parental alienation from the perspective of the parent who is alienated from their child.

#### Why have I been invited to advertise?

You have been invited to advertise this study because we believe that this organisation could potentially have the outreach to assist in the recruitment of our target audience. Our research targets are parents aged between 18 to 60 years in the general population, who are currently alienated from one of their biological children. It is important to acknowledge that your participation to advertise this research is voluntary, whilst we would appreciate your involvement, we respect your right to decline and this decision will have no consequences. Additionally, if you decide to withdraw your consent to advertising at any stage during the study, you may do so without providing an explanation. The information that will be gained throughout the potential participation of individuals from this organisation will be kept completely confidential, they will be identified by a unique code, and no names will be used in the publication of this research. All information will be kept in a locked storage compartment in the School of Psychology and a secure computer file.

### **What will participants be asked to do?**

The research will take place online via Limesurvey. Participants will be asked to complete a consent form prior to being asked to complete a survey. This will involve a series of questions with scales ranging from 0 = strongly agree to 4= strongly disagree, or 0 = never to 4 = always, for example. Here is an example statement: 'In the last month, have you experienced interference with time spent with your child?'. This process should take approximately 1 hour.

### **Are there any possible benefits from advertising this study?**

The results of the study may have implications for the development of improved therapeutic assistance for people struggling with similar alienated relationships.

### **Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?**

There are no specific risks associated with participating in this study. However, participants may find the questions upsetting.

### **What if I change my mind during or after the study?**

You are free to withdraw your advertisement of this study at any time, and if you decide to do so, you may without providing an explanation. The individuals of this organization who may potentially participate are also free to withdraw from this study at any time, and they too can do so without providing an explanation. Although, once they have completed the study they will be unable to withdraw their data as it has been collected anonymously.

### **What will happen to the information when this study is over?**

The data from this study will be stored in a School of Psychology locked storage compartment and a secure computer database. The data will be destroyed five years after the publication of the thesis via secure document disposal and deletion of files (November 2019). The data will be kept in a confidential manner and only the researchers involved in this study will have access to this data.

### **How will the results of the study be published?**

This study following completion will be accessible on the University of Tasmania website ([www.utas.edu.au](http://www.utas.edu.au)), and will be produced as a Masters thesis. Participants will be non-identifiable in the publication of results.

### **What if I have questions about this study?**

Mandy Matthewson: [Mandy.Matthewson@utas.edu.au](mailto:Mandy.Matthewson@utas.edu.au)

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“This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au). The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [H14391].”

Thank you for taking time to consider advertising this research. We have included a flyer if you wish to display it.

Kind regards,

Sian Balmer (Masters Student)

Dr Mandy Matthewson (Clinical Psychologist/Lecturer/Chief Investigator)

Dr Kimberley Norris (Clinical Psychologist/Lecturer/Co-researcher)

## Appendix D

### Full Survey

#### Parental Alienation Target Parent Perspective Survey

##### Socio-Demographic Information

What is your age in years?

What is your gender?                      Male                      Female

What is today's date?

What is your date of birth?

What country were you born in?

What is your relationship status?

Never married

Now married including de facto relationship

Widowed

Divorced or Separated

Single

What is your employment status?

Full time (including self-employed)

Part time (including self-employed)

Not employed

Full time student

Part time student

What suburb do you currently reside in?

What state/province do you currently live in?

What country do you currently live in?

What is your current postcode or zipcode?

What is the primary language spoken in your household?

Are multiple languages spoken in your household?                      Yes                      No

If yes, what languages?

How many children are you currently alienated from?

Please provide the gender of each child in the boxes below (There are 10 boxes

provided on the survey).

Please provide the age in years of each child you are alienated from in the boxes below? Please make sure that these responses correspond with the responses from the previous question. (There are 10 boxes provided on the survey).

In this survey you need to hold a particular child in your mind when answering questions. This child will be referred to as the “Target Child,” which will be the child whom you currently feel the most isolated from and whom you will report about throughout this survey.

What is the target child’s current age in years?

What is the target child’s gender?    Male    Female

What is your biological status in relation to the target child?

Biological mother

Biological father

Step mother

Step father

Adoptive mother

Adoptive father

Were you present at the birth of the target child?    Yes    No

How many biological children do you have?

How many children do you share with your target child’s other biological parent?

(This should be the alienating parent)

Do you have biological children with people other than the alienating parent?

Yes                      No

If yes, how many children do you share with people other than the alienating parent?

If no, please enter zero (0)

Do you have any step children?

Yes                      No

If yes, how many step children do you share with people other than the alienating parent?

If no, please enter zero (0)

Does the target child currently reside with you?

Yes                      No

What custody do you have of your target child according to the custody orders?

Primary custodial parent

Non-custodial parent with visitation or parenting time

Non-custodial parent with supervised visitation

Joint custody

Non-custodial with unsupervised visits

No custody

Other

What custody do you actually have of your target child?

Primary custodial parent

Non-custodial parent with visitation or parenting time

Non-custodial parent with supervised visitation

Joint custody

Non-custodial with unsupervised visits

No custody

Other

### **Exposure to Alienating Behaviours Survey**

The following section will ask you about your own experiences, as well as about your perceptions about the intentions, behaviours and thoughts of the alienating parent.

How many times in the last month...

Have you experienced interference with the time spent with your child?

Never                      Sometimes                      Often                      Very Often                      Always

Has the alienating parent implied that you are a bad or dangerous person who has intentions to hurt your child?

Never                      Sometimes                      Often                      Very Often                      Always

Has the alienating parent interrogated your child after they have spent time with you?

Never                      Sometimes                      Often                      Very Often                      Always

Has the alienating parent said bad things about you to your child or to others in front of your child?

Never                      Sometimes                      Often                      Very Often                      Always

Has the alienating parent attempted to damage the loving connection between

yourself and your child?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has the alienating parent withdrawn their love from your child when your child expresses support of you?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has the alienating parent demanded your child to be loyal only to them?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has the alienating parent inappropriately disclosed information about your relationship with them to your child?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has the alienating parent attempted to remove your child from your life completely?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has the alienating parent cut you off from receiving information about your child?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has the alienating parent encouraged an unhealthy alliance with your child, such as encouraging your child to spy on you?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has your child been defiant while spending time with you?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

Has the alienating parent used outside forces against you, such as making false reports to the police about you?

Never            Sometimes            Often            Very Often            Always

### **Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (Gerard, 2002)**

The statements below describe different ways some parents feel about their children.

For each statement, decide how you feel and select the response that best reflects your feelings at this time. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. My child generally tells me when something is bothering him or her

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

2. I have trouble disciplining my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

3. I get as much satisfaction from having children as other parents do

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

4. I have had a hard time getting through to my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

5. I spend a great deal of time with my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

6. When it comes to raising my child I feel alone most of the time

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

7. My feelings about being a parent change from day to day

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

8. Parents should protect their children from things that might make them unhappy

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

9. If I have to say no to my child I try to explain why

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

10. My child is more difficult to care for than most children are

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

11. I can tell by my child's face how he or she is feeling

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

12. I worry a lot about money

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

13. I sometimes wonder if I'm making the right decisions about how I raise my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

14. Being a parent comes naturally to me

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

15. I sometimes give in to my child to avoid a tantrum

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

16. I love my child just the way he or she is

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

17. I get a great deal of enjoyment from all aspects of my life

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

18. My child is never jealous of others

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

19. I often wonder what the rewards are in raising children

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

20. My child tells me all about his or her friends

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

21. I wish I could set firmer limits with my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

22. I get a great deal of satisfaction from having children

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

23. I sometimes feel as if I don't have more time away from my child I'll go crazy

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

24. I regret having children

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

25. Children should be given most of the things they want

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

26. My child is out of control most of the time

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

27. Being a parent isn't as satisfying as I thought it would be

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

28. I feel that I can talk to my child on his or her level

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

29. My life is very stressful right now

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

30. I never worry about my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

31. I wish my child would not interrupt when I'm talking to someone else

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

32. Parents should give their children all the things the parents never had

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

33. I generally feel good about myself as a parent

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

34. I sometimes feel overburdened by my responsibilities as a parent

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

35. I feel very close to my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

36. I'm generally satisfied with the way my life is going right now

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

37. I have never had any problems with my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

38. I can't stand the thought of my child growing up

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

39. My child would say I'm a good listener

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

40. I often lose my temper with my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

41. I am very involved with my child's sports or other activities

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

42. My spouse and I work as a team in doing chores around the house

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

43. I have never been embarrassed by anything my child has said or done  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
44. My child really knows how to make me angry  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
45. Parents should be careful about whom they allow their children to have as friends  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
46. When my child has a problem, he or she usually comes to me to talk things over  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
47. My child never puts off doing things that should be done right away  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
48. Being a parent is one of the most important things in my life  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
49. Women should stay at home and take care of the children  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
50. Teenagers are not old enough to decide most things for themselves  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
51. My child keeps many secrets from me  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
52. Mothers who work are harming their children  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
53. I feel I don't really know my child  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
54. I sometimes find it hard to say no to my child  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
55. I wonder if I did the right thing having children  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
56. I would really rather do a lot of other things than spend time with my child  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
57. It is a parent's responsibility to protect their children from harm  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
58. Sometimes I wonder how I would survive if anything were to happen to my child  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
59. I miss the close relationship I had with my child when he or she were younger  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
60. My child rarely talks to me unless he or she wants something  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable
61. A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children  
 Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable



62. It's better to reason with children than to just tell them what to do

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

63. I spend very little time talking to my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

64. I feel there is a great distance between me and my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

65. For a woman, having a challenging career is just as important as being a good mother

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

66. I often threaten to punish my child but never do

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

67. If I had to do it over I probably wouldn't have children

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

68. Fathers should help with child care

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

69. Mothers should work only if necessary

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

70. Some people would say my child is a bit spoiled

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

71. I worry a lot about my child getting hurt

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

72. I seldom have time to spend with my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

73. Below age four most children are too young to be in a regular preschool or day-care programme

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

74. A woman can have a satisfying career and be a good mother too

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

75. I carry a photograph of my child in my wallet or purse

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

76. I have a hard time letting go of my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

77. I feel I don't know how to talk to my child in a way he or she really understands

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

78. Having a full time mother is best for a child

Strongly agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know/Not applicable

**Parental Competence (Johnson & Mash, 1989)**

Listed below are a number of statements. Please respond to each item indicating the strength of your agreement or disagreement with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child. An understanding I have acquired.

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

2. Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is at his/her present age

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

3. I go to bed in the same way I wake up in the morning – feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

4. I do not know what it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

5. My parents were better prepared to be good parents than I am

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

6. I would make a fine model for a new parent to follow in order to learn what he/she would need to know to be a good parent

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

7. Being a parent is manageable and any problems are easily solved

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

8. A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing if you're doing a good job or a bad one

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

9. Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

10. I meet my own expectations for expertise in caring for my child

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

11. If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

12. My talents and interests are in other areas, not in being a parent

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

13. Considering how long I've been a parent, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role

Strongly agree    Agree    Mildly Agree    Mildly Disagree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

14. If being a parent of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent

Strongly agree	Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good parent to my child					
Strongly agree	Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16. Being a parent makes me tense and anxious					
Strongly agree	Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

### **Parental Responsibility (McBride & Mills, 1993)**

The following items are about activities that many parents do with their young children. We would like you to tell us who has the responsibility for each activity. Responsibility in this sense means who remembers, plans, and schedules the activities, regardless of who actually ends up doing it. It is possible to have responsibility for an activity without actually doing it. Please choose the answer that is most appropriate for each item.

#### **1. Take the child to the health care clinic**

- Mother always responsible
- Mother usually responsible
- Both parents responsible
- Father usually responsible
- Father always responsible

#### **2. Buy the child's clothes**

- Mother always responsible
- Mother usually responsible
- Both parents responsible
- Father usually responsible
- Father always responsible

#### **3. Buy the child's toys**

- Mother always responsible
- Mother usually responsible
- Both parents responsible
- Father usually responsible
- Father always responsible

#### **4. Supervise a part of the morning routine e.g. dressing, breakfast, etc**

- Mother always responsible
- Mother usually responsible
- Both parents responsible
- Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

5. Clean the child's room

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

6. Determine when to take the child to the paediatrician due to illness

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

7. Determine appropriate clothes for the child to wear

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

8. Spend special time at bedtime e.g. read a story

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

9. Take the child on a special trip/outing

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

10. Make babysitting arrangements

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

11. Determine and implement discipline strategies

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

12. Stay at home or make child care arrangements when the child is sick

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

13. Determining appropriate bed time and putting the child to bed at night

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

14. Selecting a child care arrangement for the child

Mother always responsible

Mother usually responsible

Both parents responsible

Father usually responsible

Father always responsible

**Stress Appraisal Measure (Peacock & Wong, 1990)**

Please respond to the following questions based on how you view the parental alienation you are experiencing right now. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Is this a totally hopeless situation?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Considerably

Extremely

2. Does this situation create tension in me?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Considerably

Extremely

3. Is the outcome of this situation uncontrollable by anyone?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Considerably

Extremely

4. Is there someone or some agency I can turn to for help if I need it?

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
5. Does this situation make me feel anxious?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
6. Does this situation have important consequences for me?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
7. Is this going to have a positive impact on me?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
8. How eager am I to tackle this problem?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
9. How much will I be affected by the outcome of this situation?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
10. To what extent can I become a stronger person because of this problem?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
11. Will the outcome of this situation be negative?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
12. Do I have the ability to do well in this situation?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
13. Does this situation have serious implications for me?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
14. Do I have what it takes to do well in this situation?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
15. Is there help available to me for dealing with this problem?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
16. Does this situation tax or exceed my coping resources?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
17. Are there sufficient resources available to help me in dealing with this situation?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
18. Is it beyond anyone's power to do anything about this situation?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
19. To what extent am I excited thinking about the outcome of this situation?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
20. How threatening is the situation?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
21. Is the problem unresolvable by anyone?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
22. Will I be able to overcome the problem?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely
23. Is there anyone who can help me to manage the problem?				
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely

24. To what extent do I perceive this situation to be stressful?

Not at all      Slightly      Moderately      Considerably      Extremely

25. Do I have the skill necessary to achieve a successful outcome to this situation?

Not at all      Slightly      Moderately      Considerably      Extremely

26. To what extent does this require coping efforts on my part?

Not at all      Slightly      Moderately      Considerably      Extremely

27. Does this situation have long term consequences for me?

Not at all      Slightly      Moderately      Considerably      Extremely

28. Is this going to have a negative impact on me?

Not at all      Slightly      Moderately      Considerably      Extremely

### **Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)**

Please read each statement and indicate how much the statement applies to you over the past week

1. I found it hard to wind down

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

2. I was aware of dryness of my mouth

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

3. I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

4. I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

5. I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

6. I tended to over-react to situations

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

7. I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands)

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

8. I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

9. I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

10. I felt that I had nothing to look forward to

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

11. I found myself getting agitated

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

12. I found it difficult to relax

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS



13. I felt down-hearted and blue

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

14. I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

15. I felt I was close to panic

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

16. I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

17. I felt I wasn't worth much as a person

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

18. I felt that I was rather touchy

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

19. I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

20. I felt scared without any good reason

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

21. I felt that life was meaningless

0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

### **Comments**

This last section is to give you an opportunity to add any further comments or information you wish to share with us, which you think might be beneficial in helping us better understand your circumstances in being alienated from your child or children. Please do not include any information that could potentially identify you or anybody else involved in your situation (including the alienating parent, your current partner, any of your children, or anyone providing you with support e.g. your psychologist, lawyer etc.).

## Appendix E

Table Displaying the Observed Frequencies for the Relationship Status of the Sample

Table E1.

*Chi-square observed frequencies for the relationship status of the sample.*

	Male <i>Observed N</i>	Female <i>Observed N</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>w</i>
Single	18	11	1.69	1	.194	.008
Married (/defacto)	39	39	0.00	1	1.00	0
Divorced (/separated)	44	58	1.92	1	.166	.092
Never Married	4	12	4.00	1	<b>.046</b>	.133

*Note.* Bolded values indicate statistical significance. *Observed N* = Observed number of participants in group;  $\chi^2$  = chi-square statistic; *df* = degrees of freedom; *p* = significance statistic; *w* = Cohen's *w* effect size; / = or.

## Appendix F

Table Displaying the Observed Frequencies for the Employment Status of the  
Sample

Table F1.

*Chi-square observed frequencies for the employment status of the sample.*

	Male <i>Observed N</i>	Female <i>Observed N</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>w</i>
Full-Time	75	56	2.76	1	.097	.111
Part-Time	7	25	10.13	1	<b>.001</b>	.212
Not Employed	14	30	5.82	1	<b>.016</b>	.026
Full-Time Student	6	6	0.00	1	1.00	0
Part-Time Student	3	3	0.00	1	1.00	0

*Note.* Bolded values indicate statistical significance. *Observed N* = Observed number of participants in group;  $\chi^2$  = chi-square statistic; *df* = degrees of freedom; *p* = significance statistic; *w* = Cohen's *w* effect size.

## Appendix G

### Normality of Distribution for Each Outcome Variable

Table G1.

#### *Distributional Properties of the Data*

	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
			Statistic	<i>p</i>	Statistic	<i>p</i>
Exposure to PA Tactics	-.80	.23	.10	<.001	.94	<.001
Parental Responsibility	.23	1.26	.20	<.001	.89	<.001
Parental Satisfaction	.19	-.41	.07	.200	.99	.260
Parenting Efficacy	.34	.20	.08	.025	.99	.209
Parental Support	.10	-.09	.06	.200	.99	.505
Satisfaction with Parenting	-.68	.26	.13	<.001	.96	<.001
Parental Involvement	-.02	.03	.08	.012	.99	.110
Parental Communication	-.02	-.31	.07	.060	.99	.424
Parent Limit Setting	.10	-.02	.09	.001	.99	.386
Parent Role Orientation	-.49	.04	.11	<.001	.97	.002
Parental Autonomy	.07	-.05	.06	.200	.99	.530
Situational Controllability-By-Self	.11	-.57	.11	.001	.97	.004
Situational Threat	-.70	-.29	.15	<.001	.92	<.001
Situational Centrality	-.99	-.25	.26	<.001	.79	<.001
Situational Uncontrollability	-.14	-.81	.081	.033	.97	.004
Situational Controllability	.94	.02	.16	<.001	.87	<.001
Situational Challenge	.48	-.04	.13	<.001	.96	.001
Situational Stressfulness	-.77	-.16	.149	<.001	.91	<.001
Stress	.43	-.16	.08	.046	.97	.008
Anxiety	.80	-.05	.12	<.001	.92	<.001
Depression	.20	-1.01	.08	.074	.96	<.001

*Note.* *p* = significance statistic.

## Appendix H

### Multicollinearity for Each Predictor Variable in Regression One

Table H1.  
*Multicollinearity of the Predictors in Regression One*

		Collinearity Statistics		Residual Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF	Mahalanobis Distance	Cook's Distance
Regression One	Outcome Variable			2.99 (1.22)	.01 (.01)
Target Parent Gender	Severity of Exposure to PA Behaviours	.92	1.08		
Target Child Gender	Severity of Exposure to PA Behaviours	.99	1.01		
Target Child Age	Severity of Exposure to PA Behaviours	.93	1.08		
<i>Note.</i> Standard deviations in parentheses. VIF = variance inflation factor; PA = parental alienation.					

*Note.* Standard deviations in parentheses. VIF = variance inflation factor; PA = parental alienation.

## Appendix I

### Means and Standard Deviations for Each Outcome Variable

Table II.

*Means, Standard Deviations and Standard Errors For All Outcome Variables*

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactics	224	40.15	9.01	0.60
Parental Responsibility	134	38.79	12.24	1.06
Parental Sense of Satisfaction	139	36.66	6.84	0.58
Parenting Sense of Self Efficacy	139	21.17	5.63	0.48
Parental Support	166	50.07	10.10	0.78
Satisfaction with Parenting	166	50.19	9.90	0.77
Parental Involvement	166	50.05	10.04	0.78
Parental Communication	166	49.98	9.97	0.77
Parent Limit Setting	166	50.14	9.86	0.77
Parent Role Orientation	166	50.09	9.97	0.77
Parental Autonomy	166	50.14	9.96	0.77
Situational Controllability-By-Self	131	12.11	4.28	0.37
Situational Threat	131	16.35	3.12	0.27
Situational Centrality	131	18.12	2.31	0.20
Situational Uncontrollability-By-Anyone	131	13.15	4.09	0.36
Situational Controllability-By-Others	131	7.60	3.56	0.31
Situational Challenge	131	12.38	3.32	0.29
Situational Stressfulness	131	16.93	2.65	0.23
Stress	128	9.30	4.92	0.44
Anxiety	128	6.66	5.50	0.49
Depression	128	9.52	6.12	0.54

*Note.* *n* = sample size; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *SE* = standard error estimate.

## Appendix J

### Table Displaying Frequencies and Percentages of Exposure to Parental Alienation

#### Tactics

Table J1.

*Frequency and percentage of exposure to each of the 13 parental alienation tactics and ratings of severity of exposure.*

Parental Alienation Tactics	Frequency	Percentage
Interrogation		
Never	13	5.8
Sometimes	15	6.7
Often	21	9.3
Very Often	46	20.4
Always	130	57.8
Damaging Loving Connection		
Never	1	0.4
Sometimes	4	1.8
Often	7	3.1
Very Often	47	20.9
Always	166	73.8
Emotional Manipulation		
Never	18	8.0
Sometimes	35	15.6
Often	43	19.1
Very Often	51	22.7
Always	78	34.7
Forcing a Loyal Response		
Never	7	3.1
Sometimes	32	14.2
Often	29	12.9
Very Often	52	23.1
Always	105	46.7
Inappropriate Disclosure		
Never	9	4.0
Sometimes	25	11.1
Often	17	7.6
Very Often	54	24.0
Always	119	52.9
Encouraging an unhealthy alliance		
Never	20	8.9
Sometimes	30	13.3



	Often	37	16.4
	Very Often	46	20.4
	Always	92	40.9
Encouraging defiance			
	Never	45	20.0
	Sometimes	31	13.8
	Often	41	18.2
	Very Often	45	20.0
	Always	63	28.0
Vilification of the TP			
	Never	16	7.1
	Sometimes	23	10.2
	Often	16	7.1
	Very Often	58	25.8
	Always	112	49.8
Eradication of the TP			
	Never	5	2.2
	Sometimes	10	4.4
	Often	12	5.3
	Very Often	41	18.2
	Always	157	69.8
Information gatekeeping			
	Never	1	0.4
	Sometimes	8	3.6
	Often	7	3.1
	Very Often	41	18.2
	Always	168	74.7
Utilising outside forces			
	Never	22	9.8
	Sometimes	23	10.2
	Often	18	8.0
	Very Often	44	19.6
	Always	118	52.4
Interference with time spent with the TP			
	Never	10	4.4
	Sometimes	15	6.7
	Often	24	10.7
	Very Often	45	20.0
	Always	131	58.2
Denigration of the TP			
	Never	5	2.2
	Sometimes	9	4.0
	Often	16	7.1
	Very Often	64	28.4
	Always	131	58.2

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*Note.* TP = target parent.

## Appendix K

### Predicting Severity of Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactics from Target Parent

#### Gender, Target Child Gender and Target Child Age

Table K1.

#### *Predicting Severity of Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactic from Target Parent*

#### *Gender, Target Child Gender and Target Child Age*

	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Target Parent Gender	3.189 [.80, 5.58]	1.22	0.177	2.63	<b>.009</b>
Target Child Age	0.262 [.01, .52]	0.13	0.136	2.03	<b>.044</b>
Target Child Gender	-1.972 [-4.29, .34]	1.18	-0.109	-1.68	.095

*Note.* *N* = 224. Bolded values indicate statistical significance. *B* = unstandardized coefficient statistic; CI = confidence interval; *SE* = unstandardized standard error coefficient;  $\beta$  = standardised coefficient; *t* = correlational statistic; *p* = significance statistic.

## Appendix L

Normality of Distribution for Each One-Way ANOVA Investigating Exposure to  
Parental Alienation Tactics for Males and Females

Table L1.  
*Distributional Properties of the One-Way ANOVAs Comparing Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactics for Each Gender*

Tactics	Male						Female					
	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk
	Statistic	p	Statistic	p	Statistic	p	Statistic	p	Statistic	p	Statistic	p
PA Exposure Total	-.65	-.08	.101	.011	.956	.002	-.99	.81	.127	<.001	.915	<.001
Interrogation	-1.09	-.06	.268	<.001	.764	<.001	-1.72	2.09	.390	<.001	.646	<.001
Damaging Loving Connection	-2.35	6.91	.397	<.001	.600	<.001	-2.46	6.43	.462	<.001	.521	<.001
Emotional Manipulation	-.36	-.91	.195	<.001	.895	<.001	-.68	-.86	.262	<.001	.817	<.001
Forcing Loyal Response	-.64	-.71	.217	<.001	.849	<.001	-1.06	-.25	.317	<.001	.736	<.001
Inappropriate Disclosure	-.94	-.30	.251	<.001	.803	<.001	-1.50	1.16	.364	<.001	.676	<.001
Encouraging an unhealthy alliance	-.39	-1.12	.193	<.001	.866	<.001	-.96	-.30	.279	<.001	.786	<.001
Encouraging defiance	.14	-1.19	.152	<.001	.891	<.001	-.67	-.98	.227	<.001	.811	<.001
Vilification of the TP	-1.01	-.17	.268	<.001	.786	<.001	-1.29	.42	.286	<.001	.725	<.001
Eradication of the TP	-2.05	4.34	.348	<.001	.649	<.001	-2.17	3.77	.456	<.001	.534	<.001
Information gatekeeping	-2.22	5.13	.444	<.001	.561	<.001	-2.37	5.31	.429	<.001	.550	<.001
Utilising outside forces	-.98	-.49	.286	<.001	.756	<.001	-1.11	-.12	.313	<.001	.738	<.001
Interference with time spent	-1.25	.68	.290	<.001	.761	<.001	-1.56	1.40	.374	<.001	.669	<.001
Denigration of the TP	-1.51	1.82	.267	<.001	.740	<.001	-1.79	2.81	.400	<.001	.636	<.001

Note. PA Exposure Total = statistics for exposure to all 13 parental alienation tactics. PA = parental alienation; TP = target parent; p = significance statistic.

## Appendix M

### Homogeneity of Variance for the Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactics

Table M1.

*Table displaying the homogeneity of variance statistics for each one-way ANOVA investigating the differences in parental alienation exposure for males and females*

Tactics	Levene's Statistic		Welch	
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Statistic	<i>p</i>
PA Exposure Total	0.58	.446	-	-
Interrogation	9.18	.003	9.55	.002
Damaging Loving Connection	4.03	.046	1.95	.164
Emotional Manipulation	0.49	.484	4.86	.028
Forcing Loyal Response	2.59	.109	5.91	.016
Inappropriate Disclosure	3.34	.069	7.76	.006
Encouraging an unhealthy alliance	4.09	.044	8.17	.005
Encouraging defiance	1.17	.282	18.82	<.001
Vilification of the TP	0.20	.656	0.39	.535
Eradication of the TP	1.01	.317	2.12	.147
Information gatekeeping	3.07	.081	0.73	.393
Utilising outside forces	0.36	.547	0.27	.603
Interference with time spent	0.00	.983	1.34	.249
Denigration of the TP	6.51	.011	9.96	.002

*Note.* PA Exposure Total = statistics for exposure to all 13 parental alienation tactics. PA = parental alienation; TP = target parent; *F* = F statistic; *p* = significance statistic.

## Appendix N

## Differential Statistics of Severity of Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactics

Table N1.  
*Means and Standard Deviations for the Differential Severity of Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactics Between Males and Females*

	Males		Females		(2-tailed)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t (df)</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
AP interfering with time spent with TC	3.11 [2.89, 3.34]	1.16	3.29 [3.09, 3.50]	1.14	-1.16 (223)	.248	-.155
AP implications of TP being dangerous	2.95 [2.71, 3.20]	1.27	3.06 [2.83, 3.29]	1.28	-0.62 (223)	.535	-.083
AP Interrogating the TC after time spent	2.91 [2.65, 3.17]	1.35	3.41 [3.23, 3.59]	1.00	-3.15 (223)	<b>.002</b>	-.422
AP speaking badly about the TP in front of the TC	3.15 [2.94, 3.36]	1.08	3.55 [3.41, 3.69]	0.75	-3.23 (223)	<b>.001</b>	-.433
AP attempts to damage loving connection	3.59 [3.45, 3.73]	0.73	3.72 [3.61, 3.83]	0.61	-1.41 (223)	.159	-.189
AP withdrawing love from TC when they express support for the TP	2.40 [2.15, 2.65]	0.12	2.78 [2.54, 3.02]	1.33	-2.20 (223)	<b>.029</b>	-.295
AP demanding TC to be loyal only to them (AP)	2.75 [2.51, 3.00]	1.25	3.14 [2.94, 3.35]	1.13	-2.45 (223)	<b>.015</b>	-.328
AP inappropriately disclosing information about TP to TC	2.88 [2.63, 3.12]	1.28	3.32 [3.12, 3.51]	1.07	-2.80 (222)	<b>.005</b>	-.376
AP attempts to completely remove TC from TP's life	3.39 [3.20, 3.58]	0.99	3.58 [3.41, 3.74]	0.90	-1.46 (223)	.145	-.196
AP cut TP off from receiving information about TC	3.68 [3.55, 3.80]	0.64	3.59 [3.44, 3.74]	0.84	0.84 (223)	.401	.113
AP encouraging unhealthy TC and AP alliance	2.44 [2.17, 2.77]	1.40	2.95 [2.72, 3.18]	1.27	-2.88 (223)	<b>.004</b>	-.386
TC being defiant during time spent with TP	1.78 [1.51, 2.05]	1.38	2.61 [2.34, 2.88]	1.48	-4.32 (223)	<b>&lt;.001</b>	-.579
AP utilising outside forces against TP	2.90 [2.62, 3.17]	1.41	2.99 [2.75, 3.24]	1.36	-0.52 (223)	.602	-.070

*Note.* Bolded values indicate statistical significance. *M* = estimated mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = correlational statistic; *df* = degrees of freedom; *p* = significance statistic; *d* = Cohen's *d* effect size; AP = alienating parent; TC = target child; TP = target parent.

## Appendix O

## Predicting Outcome Variables from Exposure to Parental Alienation Tactics

Table O1.  
*Predicting Parental Responsibility, Parental Sense of Competence, Parent-Child Relationship, Stress Appraisal and Affect from Severity of Exposure to Parental Alienating Behaviours*

	<i>n</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	SE	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Parental Responsibility	134	.000	-.01	0.001	-.004 [-.255, .246]	.127	-.003	-0.03	.973
Parental Satisfaction	139	.011	.004	1.49	.084 [-.052, .220]	.069	.104	1.22	.224
Parenting Efficacy	139	.024	.02	3.31	-.102 [-.214, .009]	.056	-.153	-1.82	.071
Parental Support	166	.009	.003	1.53	.108 [-.064, .280]	.087	.094	1.24	.219
Satisfaction with Parenting	168	.002	-.005	0.25	-.044 [-.218, .130]	.088	-.039	-.500	.618
Parental Involvement	168	.007	.001	1.13	-.093 [-.267, .080]	.088	-.082	-1.06	.290
Parental Communication	169	.016	.010	2.71	-.144 [-.316, .029]	.087	-.126	-1.65	.102
Parent Limit Setting	167	.000	-.006	0.001	.002 [-.172, .177]	.088	.002	.026	.980
Parent Role Orientation	167	.006	.000	0.93	-.085 [-.260, .089]	.088	-.075	-.963	.337
Parental Autonomy	168	.004	-.002	0.65	-.071 [-.245, .103]	.088	-.062	-.807	.421
Situational Controllability-By-Self	131	.006	-.002	0.73	-.039 [-.128, .051]	.045	-.075	-0.86	.393
Situational Threat	131	.038	.03	5.11	0.073 [.009, .137]	.032	.195	2.26	<b>.026</b>
Situational Centrality	131	.013	.01	1.64	.031 [-.017, .079]	.024	.112	1.28	.203
Situational Uncontrollability	131	.009	.002	1.23	.048 [-.037, .133]	.043	.097	1.11	.270
Situational Controllability-By-Others	131	.001	-.01	0.19	-.016 [-.091, .058]	.038	-.038	-0.43	.668
Situational Challenge	131	.000	-.01	0.04	-.007 [-.076, .063]	.025	-.017	-0.19	.848
Situational Stressfulness	131	.001	-.01	0.19	.012 [-.043, .068]	.028	.038	0.44	.663
Stress	128	.001	-.01	-0.17	.022 [-.083, .126]	.053	.037	0.41	.682
Anxiety	128	.024	.02	3.08	.102 [-.013, .217]	.058	.154	1.75	.082
Depression	128	.001	-.01	0.10	.021 [-.108, .150]	.065	.029	0.32	.748

*Note.* Bolded values indicate statistical significance. *n* = sample size; *R*<sup>2</sup> = estimate of fit to model; Adjusted *R*<sup>2</sup> = adjusted estimate of fit to model; *F* = *F* statistic; *B* = unstandardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval; SE = standard error;  $\beta$  = beta standardised coefficient ; *t* = correlational statistic; *p* = significance statistic.